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To Mrs Annie M. Thornton,
with the grateful love of her
devoted friends,
Mr. & Mrs John R. Miller.
March 24- 1911.

Marjorie Fleming

The Story of Her Life

Told with Her Letters

By L. Mac Pace

Illustrated

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By Lucas Pocock, M.A.

With many Illustrations

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From a water-colour drawing.

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Marjorie Fleming

A Story of Child-Life Fifty Years Ago

By John Brown, M.D.

Illustrated

G. P. Putnam's Sons. New York: 27 and 29 West Twenty-third Street. London: 24 Bedford Street, Strand. The Knickerbocker Press. 1904

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Preface to the American Edition

BRIEF and elusive as have been the glimpses of Pet Marjorie vouchsafed to the reading public, her bright, ethereal figure has left an unfading impression on the imagination and there must be many to whom a fuller revelation will be welcome. Her little life-story and her wonderful diaries, hitherto unpublished, are therefore set forth in the following pages. The child endeared herself both to her own family and to a wide circle of cultured friends, including Sir Walter Scott, whose cousin was married to her aunt. But it was not until her tiny form had rested for fifty years in the ancient churchyard of Abbotshall that there appeared in print the first reference to her remarkable personality. Mr. Henry B. Farnie, a journalist and playwriter, then published an appreciation of the

little maid, illustrated by sentences culled from her journals. Dr. John Brown, author of *Rab and his Friends* and *Horæ Subsecivæ*, having seen this sketch, made independent enquiries and published a charming article entitled *Marjorie Fleming*, in which he gave special prominence to her influence on Scott. This twenty-page pamphlet, as Mr. Eric S. Robertson well remarks in his book *The Children of the Poets*, is the "best book about a child that ever was written." Since its publication, many writers have "added a stone to the cairn" of Pet Marjorie, and in Britain's roll of fame, *The Dictionary of National Biography*, Sir Leslie Stephen concludes the paragraph devoted to her with the words, "Pet Marjorie's life is probably the shortest to be recorded in these volumes and she is one of the most charming characters."

The preparation of a book describing more fully Marjorie's life and surroundings was suggested by the centenary of her birth, and the writing of its pages has been done in what used to be her garden and playground. While the materials were being collected, the fortunate discovery was made that a manu-

script copy of her journals still existed, and Dr. Brown's son has kindly allowed it to be used. The family of Capt. Bremner, Marjorie's nephew, have lent books and other relics, and a dear friend of Marjorie's mother and sister, who lives in the house where the child was born and died, has contributed interesting details. Though but newly published in England, the book has been to some extent rewritten for America, and the opportunity has been taken to embody additional information; for Marjorie has always had friends in the States, and it may be hoped that this completer revelation of her sweet self will commend her still more to the affections of American readers.

L. M.

LONDON, *April 2, 1904.*

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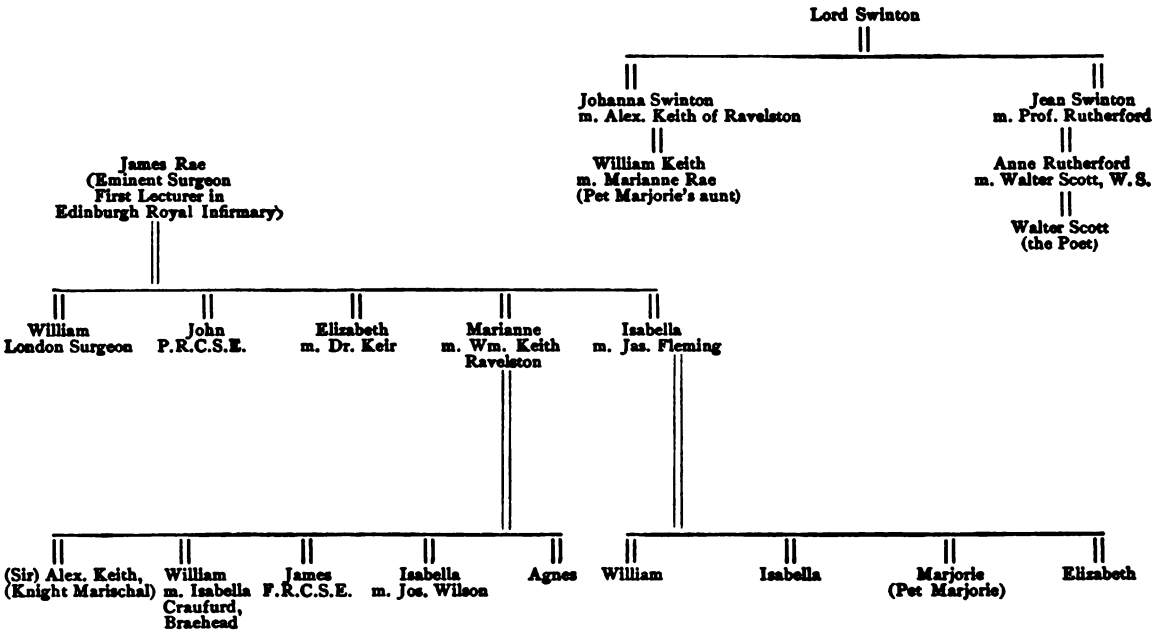


MARJORIE FLEMING

BY

L. MACBEAN

MARJORIE FLEMING

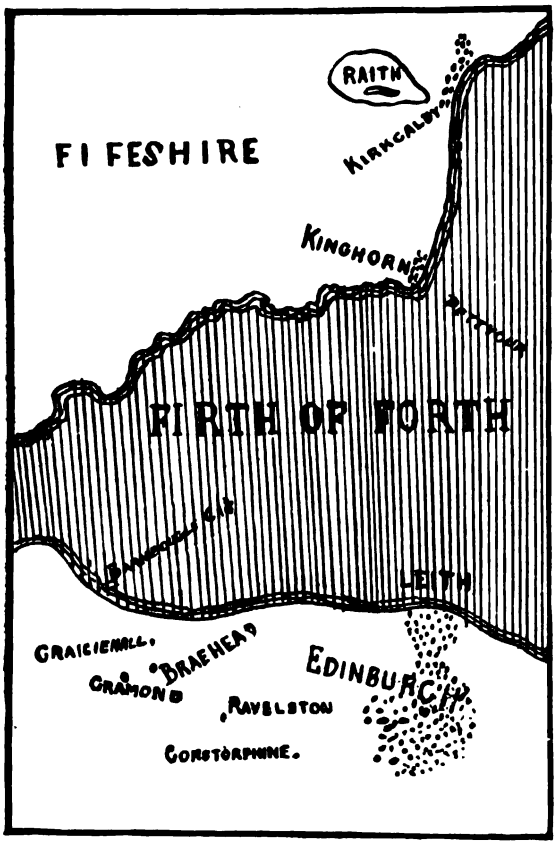
A Brief Career

MARJORIE FLEMING, the winsome "Maidie" of her own family, the "Bonnie Wee Croodlin' Doo" of Sir Walter Scott, was born just a hundred years ago in the old-fashioned Scottish town of Kirkcaldy, on the northern shore of the Firth of Forth. Her little span of life covered barely nine years, and of these three were spent in and near Edinburgh on the opposite shore of the Firth. It was a brief career, and yet in those few seasons Marjorie became "the Immortal Child" of all literature, and "the most attractive of whom record has been written." Her artless writings have been classed with the wonders of the world, though indeed she was often but a merry, inconsequent babbler, as every real child must be. A real, natural child she was differing in nothing from other child-

A Real Child

ren, unless in the extraordinary vividness of her feelings and the consequent piquancy of her language, and very childlike was every expression of her affectionate disposition. But though a child, Marjorie had keen literary tastes, and her eager mind revelled in the books available at the beginning of the nineteenth century. She also inherited strong religious emotions, and these were unduly stimulated by the stern Calvinistic puritanism of the Scottish theology of that period, with results that were pathetic. No one who knew little "Maidie" could escape her personal charm, and fortunately for us that charm is no mere tradition, for she chanced to embody much of her mind and heart in the little diaries which are here published.

The family of Marjorie's father belonged to Perthshire, and were in comfortable circumstances, being possessed of a small property in the parish of Kirkmichael. The Flemings were rather proud of their Highland descent, and it is perhaps not straining the point to trace to this source the perfervid genius, or, to use Burns's words, the "hair-brained sentimental trace" found in little Marjorie. Her



Map Showing Location of Raith.

Marjorie's Parents

great-grandfather had a shepherd who witnessed the fall of Viscount Dundee at the battle of Killiecrankie. Her grandfather came under the glamour of Prince Charlie and fought for him at Culloden, a fact treasured in the traditions of the family. Her father, James Fleming, was educated at Blairgowrie and the Grammar School at Perth, and afterwards at Edinburgh. In 1788 his brother, the Rev. Dr. Fleming, was appointed by the magistrates of Kirkcaldy to the Parish Church of the town. Mr. James Fleming settled in Kirkcaldy, probably on the invitation of his brother, and soon established a good business as an accountant.

Marjorie's mother, Isabella Rae, was the youngest daughter of an eminent Edinburgh surgeon. His five children were all endowed with intellectual qualities of no ordinary kind, and Isabella was particularly accomplished. She was educated at the High School of Edinburgh and among her friends and companions there, and also before she went to school, were Walter Scott, Francis Jeffrey, and Henry Brougham, the first being rather older and the last mentioned con-

Admirer of Walter Scott

siderably younger than she was. Isabella used to say that she "liked Wattie much better than either Frankie, or Harry." On one occasion when the children were playing together in Parliament Square, some jostling took place during which she knocked Frankie down. It was an experience for the future Lord Francis Jeffrey, but as one of the maids in charge turned on Isabella and shook her, the little girl had most cause to remember the incident.

Isabella's eldest sister, Elizabeth, was also an admirer of Walter Scott, but being much older than he, she was able to patronise and encourage him. Observing his talent as a youth, though he was then unknown to fame, she wrote the lines mistakenly ascribed by his biographer, Lockhart, to Mrs. Cockburn, author of *The Flowers of the Forest:*

Go on, dear youth, the glorious path pursue,
Which bounteous Nature kindly smoothes for you;
Go bid the seeds her hands have sown arise,
By timely culture, to their native skies.
Go, and employ the poet's heavenly art,
Not merely to delight, but mend the heart!

It is also worthy of record that Elizabeth

House where Marjorie was Born

with the assistance of her sister Isabella, Marjorie's mother, became the founder of one of Scotland's most useful charities, the Royal Society for Relief of Incurables.

It was at a dance in Whitehouse, the home of Mr. Fergus, the Chief Magistrate of Kirkcaldy, that Isabella Rae first met James Fleming. The acquaintance thus formed led to their marriage, which took place at the fine old mansion house of Giles Grange, Edinburgh, the residence of the bride's grandfather. Mr. and Mrs. Fleming lived at 130 High Street, Kirkcaldy, and it was here that their third child, Marjorie, was born on the 15th January, 1803. The house is little changed since then. It is a three-storey building, the ground floor used as a bookseller's shop, behind which in Marjorie's day was the kitchen belonging to the dwelling-house above. The entrance to the house is through an arched way, which also led to the garden. The end of the house towards the sea is a rounded storm-gable and beneath it is the long room which during Marjorie's childhood was used as a drawing-room. It was furnished with slender bamboo and

Playmates and Playground

Chippendale furniture, covered with Kirkcaldy made linen ornamented with curious figures cut from chintz. Here Marjorie used to sit and read much, even before she had attained her fifth year. The dining-room looked to the street, and from the front windows she loved to watch the stage coaches, and other traffic. In the next flat above was her nursery, and at the top of the staircase may still be seen the grooves of the little gate intended to save her from falling downstairs. This old house Marjorie shared with her brother William, five years, and her sister Isabella, two years older than herself. During the first five years of her life these were her playmates, and the big old-fashioned garden, rich in currant bushes and flowers and grassy slopes, was her playground.

Kirkcaldy was a small manufacturing town, the sea within easy reach on the one side, and country lanes on the other. The causewayed street, the sandy beach, the quiet roads and hedgerows, and the lovely policies of Raith, which lay just a mile from her home, were Marjorie's larger playground, but the children were not permitted to wander

Marjorie's Birthplace.

far except in charge of a nurse. Raith was then as now the family seat of the Fergusons, whose present representative is Mr. Munro-Ferguson, M.P., a prominent politician, the friend of Lord Rosebery and husband of Lady Helen, daughter of the late Marquis of Dufferin. One of the earliest stories of her childhood relates to a walk with her sister Isabella and their nurse, Jeanie Robertson, in Raith Grounds. The nurse was devoted to Marjorie, but rather unpleasant to Isabella. The story told by a member of the family is as follows:

Maidie's Rescue

"When walking in Raith Grounds, the two children had run on before, and old Jeanie remembered they might come too near a dangerous mill-lade. She called to them to turn back; Maidie (Marjorie's pet name) heeded her not, rushed all the faster on and fell, and would have been lost had not her sister pulled her back, saving her life but tearing her clothes. Jeanie flew on Isabella to 'give it her' for spoiling her favourite's dress. Maidie rushed in between, crying out, 'Pay (whip) Maidie as much as you like and I will not say a word, but touch Isy and I will

Portraits of Marjorie

roar like a bull.' Years after Maidie was resting in her grave," adds Marjorie's younger sister, "my mother used to take me to the place, and told the story in the exact words."

Our knowledge of the child has been made more intimate by the portraits procured for this book, most of them now published for the first time. The earliest extant portrait is too unflattering for reproduction. It represents Maidie at the age of three years or so, a stout child dressed in brown blue-braided tunic with low body, white linen drawers descending to the ankles and well frilled as was the fashion of the period, and a neat pair of red shoes. In her arms she fondles a large toy dove while she drags along by a red worsted cord the basket containing the dove's nest. The portrait is painted on a card and may have been Maidie's first valentine.

The other portraits show the child at various ages from her sixth to her ninth year. They confirm the testimony of her family that she was a healthy, well-conditioned child. Her younger sister, who often heard of the little maid from their mother's lips, wrote,

A Challenge

"I believe she was a child of robust health, of much vigour of body, and beautifully formed arms, and until her last illness was never an hour in bed." As an accurate summing up of Marjorie's appearance, and a penetrative comprehension of her nature, nothing could be better than the description so aptly worded by Mrs. Jessie Patrick Findlay: "The deep, dark eyes and bow-like mouth suggest remarkable thoughtfulness and energy, albeit in repose. In all the portraits there is a striking spaciousness of forehead, more particularly between the eyes, and those eyes hold just a suspicion of hauteur in their questioning depths. The mouth is beyond doubt the characteristic feature in the child's face. It is at once sensitive and strong, and in it there is plain evidence of her loving disposition, and also of the 'temper' which Marjorie so remorsefully deplores. The whole face seems to challenge the onlooker to read the character of its possessor, so full of contradiction is it, so full of diverse possibilities."

Isa Keith, Marjorie's cousin and dearest friend, to whose deft pencil we owe the portraits, says she was "in no great beauty," and

Aglow with Life

Pet Marjorie herself, no doubt echoing the verdict of Isa and other friends, writes in her journals, "I am very strong and robust and not of the delicate sex nor of the fair but of the deficent in looks." The confession was no doubt sincere, and yet if these portraits have any truth the child was, if not beautiful, at least interesting and attractive. That the portraits are faithful to the original no one can doubt who examines them, and finds in each the same spirited, sensitive, thoughtful girl—no matter how different her mood and her circumstances. Whether in the full bloom and buoyancy of happy girlhood, or in the weakness of disease, the child has in each the same open, fearless gaze full of questioning and challenge, the same longing for knowledge and for love. For Marjorie, so far from being a pale weakling, as precocious children often are, was all aglow with life, eager to discover all the world had to reveal, and ready to repay affection a hundredfold. It was perhaps well that hers was the fate of those whom the gods love. Those deep, passionate eyes, that proud, sensitive mouth, that impulsive temperament, contained all

Treasured Souvenirs

the possibilities of disaster. The world yields no adequate satisfaction for an ardent nature like Marjorie Fleming's.

There could be no greater tribute to the love-compelling power of our Maidie than the fact that so many souvenirs of her brief life were preserved by her friends, and are still treasured after a hundred years. We have seen and touched four tresses of her pretty hair ranging in colour from almost lint-white, cut when she was a tiny infant, through auburn and light brown to the deep brown of her ninth year. On the paper enclosing the last-mentioned are the words in her mother's handwriting, "Cut during her last illness."

Scarcely less pathetic is a tiny pass-book, quite blank, but once a possession of Marjorie's, and intended to have been filled by her had she lived. On the inside of the cover are the sorrowful words, "A Remembrance of dear Maidie, who died Dec. 19, aged 8 years and 11 months. By her mother, Jan. 12, 1812." The blank pages are very suggestive. What childlike reflections might have covered them had the little owner lived!

Another relic of little Maidie long preserved

Longing for Knowledge

by her family, but now lost, was a copy of *Rosamond* and *Harry and Lucy* by Miss Edgeworth. It bore an inscription showing that it was "a gift to Marjorie from Walter Scott."

Maidie's Bible has also been treasured for her sake. It is in two little volumes, as Bibles were often bound in those days. The faded book-marks still remain as she placed them, one at David's lament for Saul and Jonathan.

Marjorie received her earliest education from her gifted mother, who found the little pupil apt to learn. She was unusually clever for her age, though of that she was quite unconscious. Eager in her thirst for knowledge, seeming almost to divine that her life would be too short for the task of conquering all the realms of the mind, she made haste to learn. And yet this longing for knowledge was not her chief characteristic. Her power and her charm lay in her affectionate disposition, her craving for love, and her lavishness in bestowing it. "I long for you," the tender-hearted little pet wrote to her older cousin, "with the longings of a child to embrace you, to fold you in my arms."

Shorter Catechism

So rich and generous a nature as little Marjorie's was bound to develop early. The warm emotional temperament of her father's family, and the intellectual brilliancy of her mother's, the literary atmosphere of her humble home, the everyday sights of her native town, the scenes of woodland and shore, and the free conversation of servants and other grown-up persons, all had their effect on the opening mind, and all got curiously reproduced in the little girl's moralisings.

Marjorie's religious training was not neglected. One of the little souvenirs still preserved is a copy of the Shorter Catechism, bearing her name, "Miss Marjory Fleming," in her own handwriting. The title "A.B.C., with the Shorter Catechism," may recall to Scottish readers the thin treatise in its orange wrapper which in olden times was found in every Presbyterian home. The combination of the alphabet and the Catechism was significant. It indicated that whenever the poor infant had mastered the A. B. C., it was a stern necessity to wrestle with the indispensable theological brochure, elaborating such themes as "Justification" and "Effectual Calling."

Infant Theologian

The old nurse, Jeanie, already mentioned, would seem to have had charge of the theological instruction in the Flemings' household, and a story is told of how she had to contend with a vein of free thought in Marjorie's brother William. He also must have been precocious, for before he was two years old—nineteen months is the age stated—he is said to have so thoroughly known his catechism that the nurse used to show him off to the officers of a militia regiment then quartered in the town. She took great pride in his acquirements, and the performance was so amusing to the officers that it was often repeated. As a reward they presented the infant theologian with a cap and feathers. Jeanie put the questions in broad Scots, beginning with, "Wha made ye, ma bonnie man?" For the correctness of this and the three next replies Jeanie had no anxiety, but her tone changed to menace and the closed "nieve" was shaken in the child's face as she demanded, "Of what are you made?" "Dirt," was the answer uniformly given. "Wull ye never learn to say 'dust,' ye thrawn deevil?" was the nurse's

demand, as she proceeded to punish the little heretic.

Literary Tastes

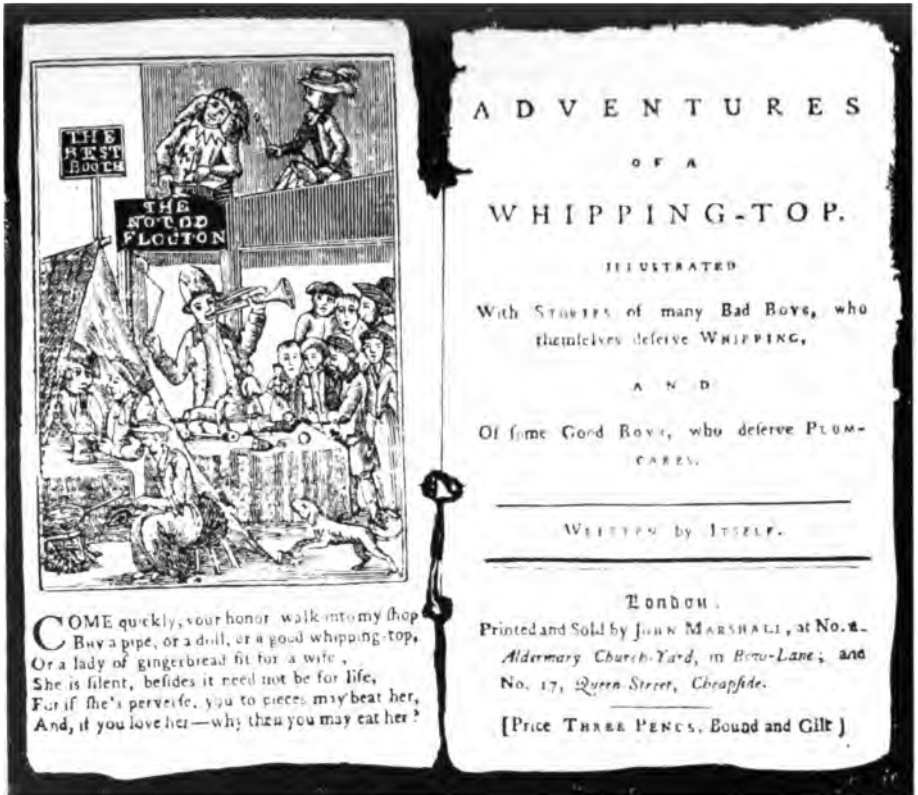
Both Mr. and Mrs. Fleming were fond of books, and instilled the same love into their children. Mrs. Fleming not only taught them to read, but guided them in their choice of reading. Mr. Fleming had a well-stocked library, and when the children performed well their daily tasks, he rewarded them by reading aloud extracts from the best authors. Marjorie's favourite books were histories and poetical works. Her vivid imagination liked to picture the persons and doings of ancient Hebrew and Scottish kings, and she delighted in the lofty language of the poets. Her literary tastes were encouraged by her parents. At any rate she was allowed free access to any books she had a mind to read, and she not only read them, but committed long passages to memory. These explorations in the realm of literature were found very delightful. But in other directions her education was less complete. She never liked arithmetic, and though she made some progress in pianoforte playing, she displayed no great fondness for music.

Children's Books

There was little choice of literature for young people in Marjorie's day. It has been stated by some writer that she never knew any books except those intended for grown-up people, but this is an exaggeration. Two of the interesting souvenirs of the little maid are books published for juvenile readers. One of these books bears a quaint title characteristic of the period, *Adventures of a Whipping Top, Illustrated, with Stories of many bad Boys who themselves deserve whipping, and of some good Boys who deserve plumcakes*, and many antique little wood-cuts adorn the yellow pages. The other book bears the title, *Original Stories from Real Life, with Conversations Calculated to regulate the affections and form the mind to Truth and Goodness.*

This little handbook must have made some impression on our Maidie, for she was always battling to "regulate her affections," though the task was usually too much for her.

Such were the children's books available in Pet Marjorie's day. No wonder that the poor wee mite, with her eager, active mind, turned from such puerile stuff to gems of English literature, which, though rather be-


THE BEST BOOTH
THE NOTED FLOUTON
COME quickly, your honor walk into my shop
Buy a pipe, or a doll, or a good whipping-top,
Or a lady of gingerbread fit for a wife,
She is silent, besides it need not be for life,
For if she's perverse, you to pieces may beat her,
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One of Marjorie's Books.
A Gift from Isabella Moody.

yond her mental grasp, were at any rate real and rational.

The Turning Point

The turning point of Marjorie's life, if a life so short and so simple can be said to have had a turning point, was the visit of her cousin, Isabella Keith, from Edinburgh, an event which took place in the summer of 1808, just when Maidie was five and a half years old. The young lady from the city had much to tell of life in the great world beyond the Firth of Forth, but she had also much to admire in the little Kirkcaldy cousin, whose knowledge of books, impetuous temperament, and loving disposition, rather impressed her. A sincere affection sprang up between these two. Isabella Keith was exceedingly fond of Marjorie, and she on her part almost worshipped her cousin Isa.

The friendship of the two girls and the educational advantages which the step would secure for Marjorie, suggested the arrangement that she should accompany her cousin back to Edinburgh. The circumstances of the Fleming family at the time, and the fact that Mr. Fleming's brother, the Parish minister, had two years before left Kirkcaldy to

Among New Friends

take charge of the important Parish of Lady Yester's, in Edinburgh, all helped to recommend the proposal. With natural reluctance Marjorie's parents consented to let her leave them, and one summer morning from the top of the stage coach she bade farewell to the familiar scenes of her childhood. The short three-mile journey from Kirkcaldy to Kinghorn was quickly over, and the two girls then crossed the Firth to Leith, a short sea voyage of seven or eight miles.

Mrs. Keith's house in Edinburgh was at No. 1 Charlotte Street, and Charlotte Square appears to have been a playground for the children. In the large city mansion the kindliness of her aunt and the love of her own Isa made Marjorie feel at home. There was a numerous family, but all were older than Marj rie, and apparently of a more repressed temperament.

Marjorie was quite happy among her new friends, but lest she should feel homesick, her sister in Kirkcaldy wrote her several letters giving the news of home. The Pet's own handwriting was never good, and she hated the drudgery of learning. Nevertheless, she

Letter to Sister Isa

was induced to write a letter in reply to her sister's messages. The child was not yet six years old, and her large handwriting filled a page with ten words or so. But it is a characteristic and forceful epistle:

"My Dear Isa,—

"I now sit down on my botom to answer all your kind and beloved letters which you was so so good as to write to me. This is the first time I ever wrote a letter in my Life.

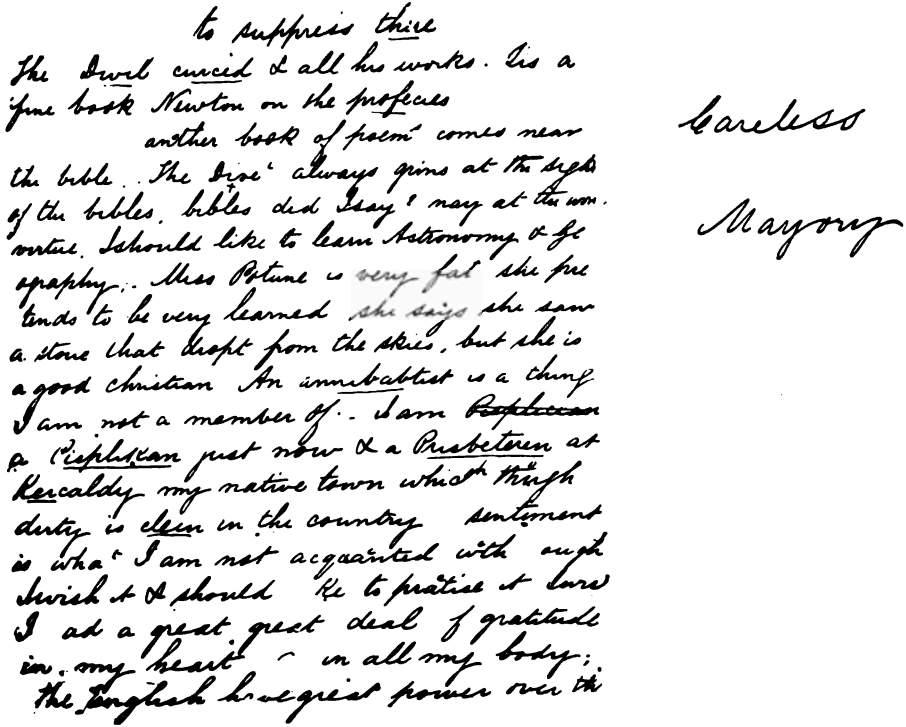
"There are a great number of Girls in the Square and they cry just like a pig when we are under the painfull necessity of putting it to Death.

"Miss Potune a lady of my acquaintance, praises me dreadfully. I repeated something out of Deen Swift and she said I was fit for the stage, and you may think I was primmed up with majestick Pride, but upon my word I felt myselfe turn a little birsay—birsay is a word which is a word that William composed which is as you may suppose a little enraged. This horid fat Simpliton says that my Aunt is beautifull which is intirely impossible for that is not her nature."

Series of Diaries

Marjorie was fortunate in her teachers—first her mother and then her cousin, who, though not yet out of her teens, was a guide and guardian to this little Fifeshire maiden. Isa Keith, finding Marjorie's handwriting backward, encouraged her to take greater pains, and with this object gave her a journal in which to write from time to time such thoughts as came into her wise little head. This was the first of quite a series of diaries which were afterwards prized by Marjorie's friends because of the pungency of their contents no less than their love for the writer. That these rude manuscripts have long since disappeared is a misfortune which all who have come to love Pet Marjorie will join in regretting. What would we not give to be able to examine Marjorie's own childish writing, and what Dr. John Brown, in his paper on *Marjorie Fleming*, described as "the faded old scraps of paper, hoarded still, over which her warm breast and warm little heart poured themselves"?

Happily for us, Dr. Brown had the manuscripts lent to him by Marjorie's sister, and before returning them he made a complete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The Devil cuncid & all his works. Tis a
fine book Newton on the profecies
another book of poems comes near
the bible. The Dive always grins at the sight
of the bibles. bibles ded Essay I nany at the com.
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ography. Mrss Petune is very fad she pre
tends to be very learned she saiys she saw
a stone that dropt from the skies, but she is
a good christian An immbabtist is a thing
I am not a member of. I am Episcocan
a Pisplidian just now & a Presbeteren at
Kercaldy my native town which though
dusty is clean in the country sentiment
is what I am not acquainted with ough
Jewish it & should like to pratise it sure
I ad a great great deal of gratitude
in my heart in all my body;
the English has great power over th

careless

Margory

Specimen Page of Manuscript.
Showing Isa Keith's rebuke.

Vagaries of Spelling

copy of them—a copy which is almost a facsimile, for it reproduces not only Marjorie's vagaries of spelling, but her erasures and corrections, Isa Keith's marks against misspelled words, and in some cases her rebukes, thus—Tomson's Fie! him. It shows that on the second page of her journal poor Marjorie came to grief over the spelling of Episcopalian and Presbyterian, which she could not get to come right. She tried "Pispliccan," but that did not look well, and so she drew her pen through it and rewrote it "Pisplikan." This was no better, but she did not know how to improve it, and so she went on to face Presbyterian which she disposed of thus—"Prisbeteren." Her cousin was shocked by these enormities, and across the face of the opposite page she wrote in bold letters the condemnation—"CARELESS MARJORY!"

The very first page of the manuscript includes examples of the chief characteristics of the whole collection—hesitating penmanship, erratic spelling, moral sentiments, appreciation of the goodness of Isabella, thoughts about love, the personality of the "Divil," and a fondness for books. But we shall no

First Love Affair

longer withhold Maidie's writings, nor shall we interrupt our readers' enjoyment of them by explanation or observation.

"[We should] not be happy at the death of our fellow creatures, for they love life like us love your neighbour & and he will love you Bountifullness and Mercifulness are always rewarded, Isabella has admirable patience in teaching me musick and resignation in perfection. In my travels I met with a handsome lad named Charles Balfour Esge, and from him I [g]ot ofers of marage offers of marage did I say? nay plainly [love]d me. Goodness does not belong [to the wicked] but badness dishonour befals wickedness but not virtue, no disgrace befals virtue perciverence overcomes almost all difficulties no I am rong in saying almost I should say always as it is so perciverence is a virtue my Csosin says pacience is a cristain virtue, which is true: fortitude is of use in time of distress, & indeed it is always of use, mamy people have su[pped] in mesery & have not had fortitude & [courage] to suppress there——

"The Divil [is] curced & and all his works Tis a fine book Newton on the profecies

The Devil Grins

"[I wonder if] anothor book of poems comes near the bible; The Divel always grins at the sight of the bibles; bibles did I say? nay at the word virtue I should like to learn Astronomy and Geography; Miss Potune is very fat she pretends to be very learned she says she saw a stone that dropt from the skies, but she is a good christian An annibabtist is a thing I am not a member of; I am a Pisplikan just now & a Prisbeteren at Kercaldy my native town which though dirty is clein in the country; sentiment is what I am not acquainted with though I wish it & should like to pratise it I wish I had a great deal of gratitude in my heart & in all my body The English have great power over the franch; Ah me peradventure, at this moment some noble Colnel at this moment sinks to the ground without breath;—& in convulsive pangs dies; it is a melancoly consideration

"Love I think is in the fasion for everybody is marring there is a new novel published named Self-controul a very good maxam forsooth Yesterday a marrade man

Sweet Isabell

named Mr John Balfour Esg offered to kiss me, & offered to marry me though the man was espused, & and his wife was present & said he must ask her permision but he did not, I think he was ashamed or confounded before 3 gentelman Mr Jobson and two Mr Kings Isabella teaches me to read my bible & tells me to be good and say my prayers, and every thing that is nesary for a good caracter and a a good concience.

"'*Composed and written at the age of six years.*'—[Isa Keith.]

"EPHIBOL ON MY DEAR LOVE ISABELLA.

"Here lies sweet Isabell in bed
With a nightcap on her head
Her skin is soft her face is fair
And she has very pretty hair
She and I in bed lies nice
And undisturbed by rats and mice
She is disgusted with Mr Wurgan
though he plays upon the organ
A not of ribans on her head
Her cheak is tinged with conscious red
Her head it rests upon a pilly
And she is not so very silly

Her nails are neat, her teeth are white
her eyes are very very bright
In a conspicuos town she lives
And to the poor her money gives
Here ends sweet Isabellas story
And may it be much to her glory

Heroic Love

"All this is true and a full discription.

"In the love novels all the heroins are very desperate Isabella will not allow me to speak about lovers & heroins and tiss too refined for my taste a lodestone is a curous thing indeed it is true Heroick love doth [never] win disgrace this is my maxum and I will follow it for ever Miss Eguards tails are very good particulary some—that are very much adopted for youth as Lazy Lawrance Tarelton False Key &c &c Persons of the parlement house are as I think caled Advocakes Mr Cay & Mr Crakey has that honour. This has been a very mild winter. Mr Banestors Budjet is to-night I hope it will be a good one. A great mamy authors have expressed themselfes too sentimentaly I am studying what I like, musick Riches, Wealth, & Honour are to be desired I have seen the

Shake-speare a Favourite

Wild Beasts & they are excelent particularly the Lion and hunting Tiger Elep-phant Bolt-ed and unbolted a door & such like wonders but of all the birds I admired the Pelecan of the Wilderness

"My Aunts birds grow every day more healthy The Mercandile Afares are in a perilous situation sickness and a delicante frame I have not & I do not know what it is, but Ah me perhaps I shall have it, Grandure reagns in London & in Edinburgh there are a great many balls and routs but none here. The childish distempers are very frequent just now Tomson is a beautifull author and Pope but nothing is like Shakepear of which I have a little knolege of An unfortunate death James the 5 had for he died of greif Macbeth is a pretty composition but awful one Macbeth is so bad and wicked, but Lady Macbeth is so hardened in guilt she does not mind her sins and faults No

"The Newgate Calender is very instructive Amusing, & shews us the nesesity of doing good & not evil Sorrow is a thing that sadines the heart & makes one grave sad and melancoly which distreses his relations and friends

Love is Troublesome

The weather is very mild & serene & not like winter,

"A sailor called here to say farewell, it must be dreadfull to leave his native country where he might get a wife or perhaps me, for I love him very much & with all my heart, but O I forgot Isabella forbid me to speak about love A great many bals & routs are given this winter & the last winter too Many people think beuty is better than virtue

"one of our beauties just now, Isabella is always reading & writing in her room & does not come down for long & I wish everybody would follow her example & be as good as pious & virtious as she is & they would get husbands soon enough, love is a papithatick thing as well as troublesom & tiresome but O Isabella forbid me to speak about it General Grame defeted the Franch the Franch prisoners have made a tumbling and my cosin says it is very neat I heard that they made ccips (? slips) of there blankets and bows to make them smart and shewy

"My cosins are sober and well behaved and very gentele and meak I study writing

The Two Balfours

& counting & deferent accomplishments James Macary is to be transported for murder in the flower of his youth O passion is a terible thing for it leads people from sin to sin at last it gets so far as to come to greater crimes than we thought we could comit and it must be dreadful to leave his native country and his friends and to be so disgraced and affronted The Spectator is a very good book as well as an instructive one Mr James and Mr John Davidson are gone to that capital town called London, Two of the Balfours dined here yesterday and Chareles played on the flute with Isabella and they are both very handsone but John had the pleasanest expression of them all but he is not instrumental which is a great loss indeed because it would afford him amusement and diversion.

"There are a great quantity of books silling off just now I am come to poor Mary Queen of Scots history which Isabella explains to me and by that I understand it all or else I would not Expostulations of all kinds are very frivolous Isabella thinks this nonsense so I will say no more about Expostulations The Birds do chirp the Lambs do leap and Nature

The Good Are Rewarded

is clothed with the garments of green yellow, and white, purple, and red. Many people who have money squander it all away but to do my cousins credit they do not do so or behave so improperly indeed they are not spendthrifts or persons of that sort. the Good are always rewarded in this world & the next as well as the comfort of of there own consciences love righteousness and hate evel and vice There is a book that is caled the Newgate Calender that contains all the Murders: all the Murders did I say, nay all Thefts & Forgeries that ever were committed & fills me with horror & consternation

"Bredheade is a sweet place & in a charming situation beside woods and revelats The weather is very cold & frosty & plenty of ice on the ground and on the watter Love your enemy as your friend and not as your foe this is a very windy stormy day and looks as if it was going to snow or rain but it is only my opinion which is not always corect I am reading some noveletts and one called the Pidgeon is an exelent one and a charming one I think the price of a pine-apple is very dear for There it is a whole bright goulden

Some Excellent Books

geinei that might have sustained a poor family a whole week and more perhaps

"Let them who are temted to do wrong consider what they are about and turn away filled with horror dread and affright There is an old Proverb which says a tile in time saves nine wich is very true indeed Fawny Rachel and the Cottage cook are very good excelent books and so are all the cheap Repository books indeed Isabella is gone a tour to Melrose Abbey and I think she will be much pleased with it & I hear it is a very fine old building indeed. In the Novellettes by Augustus Von Kot Zebue I have paid particular attention to one called the Pidgeon because it is a nice and a good story The Mr Balfours are gone far far away and I will not so much as see or hear of them anny more but I will never forget them never never

"I am overpowered with the warmness of the day & the warmness of the fire & it is altogether unsufferable though there is a good deal of wind

"Exodus & Genesis are two very good books as all the bible is I am sure of it indeed I like the old testament better than the new

Pet Marjorie.

(*From a Stone colour sketch by Miss Isa Keith.*)

but the new is far more instructive than the old.

Address to Isabella

"The hedges are spruting like chiks from the eggs when they are newly hatched or as the vulgar say clacked

"I pretended to write to a lord yesterday named Lord Roseberry about killing crows & rooks that inhabit his castle or estate but we should excuse My Lord for his foolishness for as people think I think Too for people think he is a little derangeed

"My address to Isabella on her return,

"Dear Isabella you are a true lover of nature thou layest down thy head like the meak mountain lamb who draws its last sob by the side of its dam taken from hill Villean a poem by Walter Scott & a most beautiful one it is indeed this address I composed myself and nobody assisted me I am sure I get acquainted with boys and girls almost every day wickedness and vice makes one miserable & unhappy as well as a concousness of guilt on our mind Doctor Swifts works are very funny & amusing & I get some by hart Vanity is a great folly & sometimes leads to a great sin disimulation

Pretty People

I think is worse this was a bad day but now is a good one Self-denial is a good thing and a virtue. St Paul was remakable for his religion and piety he was in a great many periels & dangers

"Many people that are pretty are very vain and conceated men praise and admire her, & some finds their heart ake because of her asks her to marry him and dies if she refuses him but is overpowered with joy if she consents to marry him Wallfler grows very well I think so at least Mereheads Sermons are I hear much praised but I never read sermons of any kind but I read Novelettes and my bible for I never forget it and it it would be a sin to forget it or my prayers either of them the barracks and we will perhaps be saccrifised to death and the grave but soulders are in serch for them & peradventure they will be found I sencerely wish so.

"The Earl of Bucan says we should take care of our character & our health poor Virtue thou art what people like O virtue! Meat is very dear nowadays People should not be proud nor saucy nor vain for vanity is a sin

Reflections upon Woman

All the King Jamess died mesirable deaths one of griefe, another murdered, but Lord Darnlys was the most cruel

"Mary Queen of Scots was a prisoner in Lochleven Castle The Casawary is an curious bird & so is the Gigantic Crane & the Pelican of the Wilderness whose mouth holds a bucket of fish and water Fighting is what ladies is not qualyfied for they would not make a good figure in battle nor in a dual Alas we females are of little use to our country & to our friends, I remember to have read about a lady who dressed herself in man's cloths to fight for her father, woman are not half so brave as her, but it is only a story out of Mothers Gooses Fary tales so I do not give it cridit, that is to say I do not believe the truth of it but it matters little or nothing Last night it was very cold but this morning it is very warm it is an extrordinary change The history of all the Malcontents that ever was hanged is very amusing I have read some of these larned men but they got there reward in due form

"Isabella this morning taught me some

Joy and True Beauty

Franch words one of which is bon suar the interpretation is good morning.

"I like sermons better then lectures Joy depends on thou O virtue Tom Jones & Greys Elegey in a country churchyard are both excelent and much spoke of by both sex particularly by the men. Personal charms are as nothing if the hart is not good & virtuous. A person may be pretty & not good & dutiful to her parents,

"Mary Queen of Scots confedrats or friends was defeated, Murys and his associats & they thought she was safe in the castle when she effected her escape, by a young boy named Gorge Duglas;

"People who steal & murder bring eternal damnation in the next world upon themselves as well as unhappiness in this world. Adam & Eve dissabayed God The scarlet fefer is like a plague just now

"God is the creator of us all and we should serve honour and obey him. Isabella has often told me that if people do not check their passion when they are young it will grow worse and worse when they are old so that nobody will love them or obey them

Sin and Punishment

Isabella is greived when I behave ill but when I behave well she kisses and careses me and she kissed me to day because I behaved well God is kind and indulgent to us which we do not deserve for we are sinful creaturs & do not deserve to be so kindly treated but god does not do so. Though we praay in publick that should not hinder us from private prayer If any mans wife marry another when her husband is yet alive everybody will hate her & she shall be the object of there deristion & there disgust. The wicked are envious of the good & just & in there mind plot his distruction but the Lord does not leave him unpunished for if he is not punished in this world he will be punished in the next & a mo t terrible punishment it will be Macary is not yet transported it must be a dreadful thing transportation God Almighty Knows every thing that we do or say & he can Kill you in a moment Bishop Sandford excels Mr. James in preaching Lying is the high road to theft and murder King John is a beautiful play & so is Richard the 3 I never saw a play acted in my life. Any body that does not do well

Passing Events

are very miserable & unhappy & not contented

With this curious anti-climax Marjorie completed her first journal the writing of which occupied many a half-hour during her first winter in Edinburgh, or the first weeks and months of 1809, when she had just passed her sixth birthday.

We catch in these writings occasional glimpses of passing events, such as the prevalence of children's ailments culminating in an epidemic of scarlet fever, the dances and other gaieties of the season, the mildness of the winter, the commercial troubles, the dearness of food, the growing coldness of the weather as the spring advanced, the sudden change to warm sunshine, and the consequent rapid growth of vegetation. Not the least interesting are the frequent remarks which remind us that Britain was then at war with France. Of the occupations and amusements of the French prisoners in Edinburgh Castle alluded to by Marjorie, a fuller description is given in R. L. Stevenson's story, *St. Ives*. That novel narrates how certain of their num-

War with France

ber escaped, and Marjorie also mentions an incident of the kind, and (no doubt repeating the gossip of the women folk) expresses the fear that the runaways might commit outrages, and peaceful people might be "sacrificed to death." Looking further afield, Marjorie refers to the conduct of the war in general, the superiority of the English (of course), and the victory of General Graham, and in a poetic outburst describes a death in battle. In the later journals we lose sight of the war entirely, but here it is particularly prominent. Marjorie gravely laments that her own sex can have no share in martial glory, and our sweet little six-year-old is debarred from sharing even in a humble "dual." All she can do is to learn a few French words, whose "interpretation" is not very exact.

When Marjorie began her journal she was told that, while striving to improve in penmanship, she was to write down such moral sentiments as ought to adorn the mind of a well-trained little girl. Hence the early prominence of obvious platitudes, relieved from dulness only by their vehemence as when the young moralist lays down the thesis that

Echoes from Older People

"lying is the highroad to theft and murder." As we proceed we find more numerous traces of opinions caught from older people. In the observations on the cost of a pine-apple, for example, one can almost hear the tones of some lady who "had a frugal mind"—the delicacy cost a whole bright "goulden" guinea, which might have "sustained" a poor family for a whole week, and "there it is!" But possibly Marjorie meant to rewrite "here it is," etc. Of course the child is constantly getting beyond her depth, as in the naïve description of the fate of the female bigamist, but childish innocence is secure amid every peril. Even her remarks about the "Divil" who is "curced and all his works," do not tinge her cheek with what she calls "conscious red."

The improvement of her mind was placed before Marjorie Fleming as a serious duty, and she faced it nobly; nor did she forget her Bible and her prayers, and "every thing nesary for a good caracter and a good concience."

Very early in 1809, Marjorie's guide and friend, Isa Keith, went away for a little tour

Loyalty to Isabella

to the South of Scotland, visiting Melrose Abbey, beloved of their friend, Walter Scott. In her absence Marjorie loyally continued her course of education, and when Isa returned the little learner received her with rejoicing and a poetic address. Love, as rightful prince of all the emotions, was the first to open the poet's treasury; it was her devotion to her cousin that made Marjorie's glowing thoughts flower into song. The lines on "Isabell in Bed" are sufficiently striking as the work of a girl of six years old, who was just learning to write; but, of course, its charm for us lies in its sweet simplicity and its fragrance of a human mind in the bud. The appendix, "all this is true and a full description" is evidence that Marjorie was not thinking so much of artistic treatment of her subject as the need to do it complete justice, omitting nothing from the picture, which must be a careful and true "description." Marjorie was simply possessed by Isa Keith. "My cousin says" is one of her favourite formulas. Almost the first sentence in the journal is a recognition of Isa's "admirable pacience" in her self-imposed task as governess. This note of grati-

Madgie's Love Affairs

tude is struck again and again throughout the journals, and more than any other reveals the real depth of Marjorie's nature. Had she been less grateful she would have been more shallow.

Madgie's little love affairs with the other sex appear to have brought her on the whole more pain than pleasure. First we have Charles Balfour, "a handsome lad" who wooed her and actually proposed; and on the very next page John Balfour, evidently the former lover's brother, offers to kiss and marry her, though, as she indignantly records, "the man was espused," and his wife was present, and said "he must ask her permission," but he did not! Happily for the credit of human nature the bold bad man appeared to be "ashamed and confounded" before "Mr Jobson and two Mr Kings," but we gather that had these been absent he would not have been in the least abashed by the presence of his wife. One is relieved to find that after all the atrocity did not result in any permanent ill-feeling, for on a subsequent page we discover these same Messrs. Balfour assisting at a musical evening in which Isa

Emotional and Imaginative

Keith is one of the chief performers, and Marjorie a delighted listener. Not a thought of rivalry between the men, not a word of regret for the apparently absent wife, and not a hint of reproach from Marjorie for the past affront. Instead we find her sympathising with Mr. John Balfour because he was "not instrumental," for she thought, "marrade man" as he was, that he required some "diversion." Still later we read that the two gentlemen are going far far away, where Marjorie will never see them again—and the relenting lady writes, "but I will never forget them—never, never."

In spite of all prohibitions from Isabella, who was evidently a model young lady, Marjorie was constantly yielding to the promptings of a heart too prone to love. Does she see a lonely sailor-man about to "leave his native country"? She at once imagines how much more comfortable it would be for the hapless wanderer to remain at home and get a wife, "or perhaps me, for I love him very much." Then, like a thunder-clap, the voice of accusing conscience sounds in her ear, and Marjorie humbly finishes, "But, O, I forgot!

Quaint English

Isabella forbid me to speak about love." Yes, but love laughs at prohibitions. Its mystery and subtle influence are too alluring; the young mind cannot away from it. "Love," says Marjorie, "is a very papithatick thing," and she gives a description of the course of the disease. When there is a beauty "some find their heart ake because of her"; if she refuses to marry him, he dies; if she consents, "he is overpowered with joy." Having disposed of the matter thus, Marjorie turns to the cultivation of wallflowers.

It is always interesting to watch children trying to wield the words of the adult world, much as a new apprentice wields the tradesman's tools with a kind of amateur originality. But no one ever produced quainter effects with common English words than does our Maidie. She vividly pictures a wounded officer dying convulsively on the field, and concludes "it is a melancholy consideration!" Quite obviously Marjorie is sometimes willing, as many children are, to use the words first and find out their proper use afterwards. Looking as wise as she knew how, she wrote "Expostulations of all kinds are very frivo-

Pet Marjorie.
(*From a pencil sketch by Miss Isa Keith.*)

Strange Meanings

lous." Isa Keith happened to look over her shoulder and naturally remarked that this was nonsense. What did Marjorie think she was saying? Did she employ the word in place of ejaculations or explanations? Or did she simply use it without attaching any meaning to it at all? Children sometimes do such things. The word is at first quite empty, but it becomes filled with a mental content in the using. Often they attach to it a conception which is not exactly the customary meaning, as when Marjorie says we should turn from wickedness "with horror and consternation," or "with horror, dread, and affright." Sometimes the meaning is clearly wrong, as when she says the history of all the malcontents that ever were hanged is very "amusing." Once at least she even coins a new word—her "Ephibol," that is, her "epitaph" or "eulogium" on her cousin.

It is through sheer inexperience in the use of words that Marjorie is sometimes so sarcastic. When she tells us that Miss Potune pretended to have seen a stone that dropped from the skies, "but she is a good Christian," Marjorie really means to soften our condemna-

Mental Alertness

tion of what seems to be a plain falsehood. Again, when she states that Kirkcaldy, her native town, though dirty, is clean in the country, she is honestly doing her best to save its reputation.

Mental alertness always characterises Marjorie's sentences. No sooner has she made a statement than she invariably examines it all round to see how it looks, and if it does not bear inspection she instantly exclaims—"No, I am rong." One of the best examples of her mental balancing is her treatment of a story from *Mother Goose's Fairy Tales*. At her age she ought to receive any story from a printed book as absolutely infallible, but she hesitates—"It is only a story out of Mother Goose's Fary Tales so I do not give it cridit;" that sounds harsh, and she hastens to explain "that is to say I do not believe the truth of it," but as this does not appear to be much better she dismisses the subject with the non-committal "but it matters little or nothing." Occasionally when stating a fact she can be as painfully precise regarding the possibility of her being mistaken as the late Mr. Gladstone often was. She writes,

"Wallfler grows well—I think so at least." "It looks as if it was going to snow or — rain — but it is only my opinion, which is not always corect."

During her stay in Edinburgh Marjorie did not attend the ministrations of her uncle in Lady Yester's Church. She accompanied her friends the Keiths to the Episcopal Church, for as she explains she was a Presbyterian in Kirkcaldy but an Episcopalian in Edinburgh.

Let no one do our Marjorie the injustice of classing her as a pale, precocious child, for she had none of the pertness and preternatural smartness of that species. She was on the contrary a healthy, warm-blooded, happy, humorous, little girl. Even her love for books contained elements of eagerness and gladness. Her Bible she loved not only because Isa Keith told her that it was her duty to do so, but because of the keen literary enjoyment its pages afforded her. Its poetical language and its picturesque narratives were equally to her taste. With evident misgiving she confessed that she liked the Old Testament better than the New, but this was plainly unorthodox, and the little trimmer,

Sympathy for Job

unwilling to hurt any one's feelings, added that the New was more "instructive." The only great figure in the New Testament that caught her childish fancy was that of St. Paul who was in Madgie's opinion "remarkable for his religion and piety" and what was more interesting for his dangers and "periels." But in the Old Testament the narratives of Genesis and Exodus, Esther and Job, with their dramatic scenes, gratified her love of the marvellous. Job's boils so filled her mind that she would not have been surprised to find her own little body some morning covered with a similar eruption, the work of "Satan." It might have soothed the patriarch had he foreseen that, though he received scant sympathy from his dearest friends and from the wife of his bosom, there waited for him at the end of the years the plentiful commiseration of a little Scotch lass! Of other religious books read by Marjorie at this time she mentions but one. Morehead's sermons she was content to know by hearsay, but Sir Isaac Newton's *Observations Upon the Prophecies* suited her childish sense of wonder, for the philosopher brought to it resources of

The Newgate Calendar

learning and powers of imagination whose results were impressive. As a relief from sermons and moral reflections one could not have thought of anything more thorough than the *Newgate Calendar*, and we can only wonder how it came into Marjorie's hands—probably not with the connivance of Miss Keith. Its lurid records, bearing the stamp of reality, left their mark on Marjorie's receptive mind, for she refers to the book again and again, but we may be sure it did her no real harm. True, she says it filled her "with horror and consternation," but she probably rather liked the sensation. Addison's *Spectator* supplied safer if less stimulating reading, and Marjorie adjudges it "instructive." For Dean Swift's works she had still warmer praise, and she did that great author the honour of committing to memory passages from his works.

Marjorie had a wide range of fiction on which to feast her growing mind. *Mother Goose's Fairy Tales* were clearly outgrown, but there seems to have been a good selection of stories in the *Repository*, which may have been an institution for disseminating literature supposed to be of an improving kind or

Miss Edgeworth's Tales

it may possibly have been *The Children's Magazine, or the Monthly Repository of Instruction and Delight*, a periodical which began to be published in 1799 and extended to two volumes. Fielding' story of *Tom Jones* naturally did not suit Marjorie's taste so much as *The Pigeon* of Augustus Frederich Von Kotzebue, a romantic German writer whose works were then in great request. Into the dim region of emotion and sentiment opened in these books Marjorie peered wistfully. "Sentiment," she wrote, "is not what I am acquainted with yet, though I wish it." But her favourite author at this period of her life was Miss Edgeworth, and that writer's tale of *Lazy Lawrence*, still in circulation and still popular seems to have pleased our little critic. Miss Edgeworth's story *Self-Control*, whose title impressed Marjorie as describing what she needed most, was published that very year anonymously, the demand for it being so great that the edition was exhausted in a month. The story is rather stilted in style, but shows ability in delineation of character.

At six years of age Marjorie began a sys-

In Love with the Poets

tematic study of history, selecting for subject her beloved Scotland, and in particular Mary Queen of Scots, whose life-story, as Marjorie tells us, with reckless grammar but perfect lucidity, "Isabella explained to me, and by that I understand it all, or else I would not." The fruit of this study awaits us in a later journal.

Marjorie was in love with all the poets. Even in this early copy-book she records her appreciation of Shakespeare, Pope, Gray, Thomson, and Wordsworth. Of Shakespeare she says she had only "a little knolege," but she could repeat passages by heart. She was familiar with the plot and leading characters of *Macbeth*, and she had read *King John* and *Richard III.*, so that her knowledge of the great classic was not more limited than that of the average adult citizen. The early works of Walter Scott, as a friend of the family—a near neighbour and a frequent visitor in the house of her aunt, were naturally familiar to her. But none of them is familiar to us as "hill Villean," and it takes an effort to discover *Helvellyn*. Maidie had a perfect genius for bad spelling. She never quite conquered

A Broadening Horizon

Helvellyn, much as she loved the verses, for in one of her last letters she writes it down "hill Valein!" At first sight it is difficult to follow the thread of her thoughts in connecting her cousin with Scott's little poem, but the cue is to be found in her favourite description of Isa as a "gentle lover of nature," and this at once suggests the picture painted by the poet:

> But meeter for thee, gentle lover of nature,
> To lay down thy head like the meek mountain lamb,
> When wildered he drops through the cliff, huge of stature,
> And draws his last sob by the side of his dam.

In the meantime Marjorie's general knowledge was extending. A visit to a menagerie enabled her to see specimens of the more remarkable wild animals she had read about. Her mind was observant of the wonders of the world around her, and she liked what she called curiosities. It is true she rejected with scorn Miss Potune's statement regarding falling ærolites, but she was constrained to admit the mysterious power of the magnet. Nature, animate and inanimate, filled her soul with unmixed delight. The singing birds, the

Marjorie Writes to her Mother

skipping lambs, the frisking calf, the glorious colours of the landscape, the beauty of the varied shades of green in the hedgerows—all these were to Marjorie a continual joy. She was, as she acknowledges, a healthy girl. "Sickness and a delicate frame I have not, and I do not know what it is," and although some dim premonition compelled her to add, "but, Ah me! perhaps I shall have it," she was at this period exceedingly happy. Above all the loving child rested with a great content in the affection of her cousin Isa, whose kisses and caresses so lovingly bestowed, made life for our Maidie very sweet.

The following letter addressed by Marjorie to her mother was written early in 1809, just after she came six years of age, a fact which she proudly chronicles—

"My Dear Mud,

"I hope you are well: give my love to Isa and Baby, and I will send them something. I have been often at Ravelstone and once at Aunt Fleming and Mrs Miller. I've been acquainted with many very genteel girls, and Janetta is a very fine one. Help is been con-

Pet Birds

fined another time. My sleeves is tucked up, and it was very disagreeable, my collar, and I abhorred it amoniable.

"I saw the most prettyist two tame pidgeons you ever saw and two very wee small kittens like our cat.

"I am very much acquainted with a young gentleman called Mordecai that I am quite in love with, another called Captain Bell, and Jamie Keith, and Willie's my great tormentor.

"A good-natured girl gave me a song book, and I am very happy.

"I'll go down and be thinking when I'm eating my dinner more to tell you, Mud."

"Aunt has got two of the most beautifullest Turtle Doves you ever saw. They coo for everlasting and fight. The hawk is in great spirits, it is a nice beast, the gentlest animal that ever was Seen, Six canaries, two green linnets, and a Thrush.

"Isa has been away for a long time and I've been wearying for her Sadly. I like Isa and Nan very much.

"I play in the back green, and bring in worms for the thrush.

Four Lovers

"I've done a pair of garters for Isabella but one of them is too Short. I will work it larger and work some for Nancy too.

"I get very long tasks, and when I behave I get them short.

"Orme Keir is the greatest recovery ever was, and he's thinking about business.

"My aunt lets out the Birds to get the air in her room.

"The young gentleman I was speaking of Mordecai, he's very funny.

"James Keith hardly ever Spoke to me. he said, Girl! make less noise, and, when there was a storm sometimes said take out away all your iron, and once before he said, Madgie, go and dance, which I was very proud of.

"Mind my Dear Mud, to return this letter when you return Isabella's.

"I've forgot to say, but I've four lovers, the other one is Harry Watson, a very delightful boy.

"Help is very like a tiger when he bites his fleas, a fine, gentle, wise creetyur.

"Willie was at the Moors, but he soon came back again, for the Moors was like a fish pond like Miss Whyts.

Teasing

"I've Slept with Isabella but she cannot Sleep with me. I'm so very restless. I danced over her legs in the morning and she cried Oh dear you mad Girl, Madgie, for she was sleepy.

"The whole house plagues me about 'Come haste to the wedding,' for there is no sense in it; they think, because it is an Merican, Eliza Purves taught me, they plague me about it exceeding much. I'm affronted to say it, it is so awkward.

"Remember your dear Madgie.

"Amen.

"Finis.

"M. F. Six years old."

The "Baby" of this letter was the little sister Elizabeth, who had arrived shortly after Madgie had left, and to whom she readily sent this loving welcome. Aunt Fleming was, of course, the wife of the minister, of whom we hear but little. Orme Keir was Marjorie's cousin, the son of her Aunt Elizabeth, whose husband, Dr. Keir, Wester Rynd, Perthshire, had died some years previously. Mrs. Keir was resident in Edinburgh and her son was

An Affectionate Nature

old enough to be in business, and just recovering from an illness.

Madgie cannot live without lovers, and she proudly makes up for her mother a list of four, only we gather that one of them, her cousin, James Keith, hardly ever spoke to her. One name on the list is that of Harry George Watson, a "delightful boy," and the future founder of the Chair of Fine Arts in the University of Edinburgh.

If there was one person more essential to our Pet than even lovers it was Isa Keith, whose name was never absent from any writing of Marjorie's. Isa was now from home, making the visit to Melrose already alluded to, and Madgie was "wearying for her sadly."

Animals were as dear to Marjorie's large heart as human beings, and wherever she went she made a list of the "fine, wise, gentle creetyers" that lived there, be they bird or beast. At Charlotte Street there appears to have been a fair collection—2 kittens, 2 turtle doves "that coo for everlasting and fight"; a hawk, the gentlest animal that ever was seen; 6 canaries, 2 green linnets, a thrush, and the doggie "Help." Marjorie was very happy.

Braehead

She was keen-witted too, for if the taciturn James addressed but few words to her, she was taking mental note of him, as of everything else around her, with an observant, amused, and loving eye. No wonder if, thus distracted, she made one of the garters too short for Miss Craufurd, and still less wonder if so lively a little girl could not sleep long in the mornings, but danced over Isa's legs like a mad little Madgie that she was.

It was near the end of summer that Marjorie got a new journal wherein to continue her writing lessons and the record of her thoughts. She had been spending the summer at Braehead, and the new journal was dated "Braehead" in Miss Keith's handwriting. Braehead is mentioned in Marjorie's first journal, and it now filled a large space in her life. The place lies just to the north of Cramond Bridge, and our Pet's description is accurate—"A sweet place in a charming situation, beside woods and rivulets."

In the days of James V., Braehead was the scene of a memorable struggle. That gallant masquerading monarch was set upon by a band of gipsies near Cramond Bridge, and would

Land of Make-believe

have fared badly but for the timeous arrival of Jock Howison, who with his flail chased them off. As reward his descendants have occupied the farm of Braehead to this day on the sole condition that they be ready to offer to the king a ewer of water in which to wash his hands. In Marjorie's day the owner was Mrs. Craufurd, and the Craufurds were on the friendliest terms with Marjorie's cousins, the Keiths. Just about this time the friendship resulted in a marriage between William Keith, an elder brother of Isa's, and Isabella, daughter of Mrs. Craufurd.

A short distance to the west of Braehead spread out the broad policies of Dalmeny, to whose noble owner Marjorie "pretended to write a letter" of remonstrance because he shot rooks. Wiser than grown-up people, Marjorie derived immense enjoyment from excursions into the Land of Make-believe.

Another frequent residence of Marjorie's was Ravelston House, about two miles west of Edinburgh. Ravelston was the beautiful family seat of the Keiths, near Murrayfield. Mrs. Keith's husband was born and brought up at Ravelston, and his children enjoyed

Ravelston

nothing so much as a little excursion to the home of their grandparents. The house bears on one of the lintels the inscription: "G. F.—Ne quid Nimis. 1622. T. B."; and on an old lintel, built up into a grotto in the garden, are the words: "IM. AR . 1624. Ye . also . as . lively . stones . are . built . as . a . spiritual house. 1. Peter."

We know from his notes to *Waverley* what a deep impression Ravelston and its old garden made on the mind of Sir Walter Scott when he played there as a boy, and Pet Marjorie fell equally under the spell of the ancient place.

At Ravelston she got balm wine, and there she loved to watch the birds and the cattle, and the sun gleaming through the trees.

It was, however, chiefly at Braehead that Marjorie wrote her second journal. Here it is:

"*Braehead.*"—[ISA KEITH.]

"The day of my existence here has been delightful and enchanting. On Saturday I expected no less than three well-made Bucks, the names of whom is here advertized: Mr Geo Crakey and Wm. Keith and Jn Keith,

Miss Elizabeth Fleming, Marjorie's Sister.

(*From a silhouette in possession of Mrs. Robertson, Dysart.*)

Sweet Enjoyment

the first is the funniest of every one of them. Mr Crakey and I walked to Crakyhall hand in hand in Innocence and matitation sweet thinking on the kind love which flows in our tender hearted mind which is overflowing with majestick pleasure No body was ever so polite to me in the hole state of my existence Mr Craky you must know is a great Buck and pretty good-looking.

"I am at Ravelston enjoying nature's fresh air, the birds are singing sweetly the calf doth frisk and play and nature shows her glorious face the sun shines through the trees it is delightful.

"Wednesday.

"Thursday, July 12th.

"I confess that I have been more like a little young Devil than a creature for when Isabella went up the stairs to teach me religion and my multiplication and to be good and all my other lessons I stamped with my feet and threw my new hat which she made on the ground and was sulky and was dreadfully passionate, but she never whiped me, but gently said Marjory go into another room and think what a great crime you are com-

An Ungrateful Child

mitting, letting your temper get the better of you, but I went so sulkily that the Devil got the better of me, but she never whipes me, so that I thinke I would be the better of it, and the next time that I behave ill I think she should do it for she never does it but she is very indulgent to me, but I am very ungrateful to her.

"Sunday 4

"Wednesday.

"To-Day I have been very ungrateful and bad and disobedient, Isabella gave me my writing, I wrote so ill that she took it away and locted it up in her desk where I stood trying to open it till she made me come and read my bible, but I was in a bad homour and red it so Carelessly and ill that she took it from me and her blood ran cold, but she never punished me, she is as gental as a lamb to me an ungrateful girl

"Isabella has given me praise for checking my temper, for I was sulkey even when she was kneeling an hole hoar teaching me to write

"Yesterday I behave extremely ill in Gods most holy church for I would never attande myself nor let Isabella attand which was a

great crime for she often tells me that when to or three are geathered together God is in the midst of them and it was the same Divel that tempted Job that tempted me I am sure but he resisted satan though he had boils and many many other misfortunes which I have escaped I am now going to tell you about the horible and wretched plaege that my multiplication gives me you cant concieve it—the most Devilish thing is 8 times 8 & 7 times 7 it is what nature itselfe cant endure

Looking Forward

"I have a delightful pleasure in view which is the thoughts of going to Braehead where I will walk to Craky—hall wich puts me In mind that I walked to that delightfull place with a delightfull young man beloved by all his friends and espacialy by me his loveress but I must not talk any longer about him for Isa said it is not proper for to speak of gentalman but I will never forget him I hope that at 12 or 13 years old I will be as learned as Miss Isa and Nancy Keith for many girls have not the advantage I have and I am very very glad that satan has not geven bols and many other misfortunes in the holy bible these

Natural Perversity

words are written that the Devel goes about like a roaring lyon in search of his pray but the lord letts us escape from him but we sometimes do not strive with this awfull spirit

"To Day I pronounced a word which should never come out of a ladys lips it was that I called John a Impudent Bitch and Isabella afterwards told me that I should never say it even in a joke but she kindly for gave me because I said that I would not do it again I will tell you what I think made me in so bad a homour is I got 1 or 2 cups of that bad bad sina tea to Day

"Last night I behaved extremely ill and threw my work in the stairs, and would not pick it up which was very wrong indeed; and all that William could do I would not go out of the room till he himself put me out, and roared like a bull and would not go to bed though Isabella bid me go, which was very wrong indeed to her when she takes so much pains with me when she would like best to be walking, but she thinks it her duty As this is Sunday I must begin to write serious thoughts as Isabella bids me, I am thinking how I should, I should Improve the many

talents I have I am very sorry I have threwn them away, it is shoking to think of it when many have not the instruction I have, because Isabella teaches me to or three hours every day in reading and writing and arethmatick and many other things and religion into the bargan. On sunday she teaches me to be virtuous.

At the Races

"Ravelston is a fine place because I get balm wine and many other dainties and it is extremely pleasant to me by the company of swine geese cocks &c. and they are the delight of my heart.

"I was at a race to Day & liked it very much but we missed one of the starts which was very provoaking indeed but I cannot help it so I I must not complain lord Mongumorys horse gained it but I am clattering so I will turn the subject to another think:— "but no I must git my spelling first, I acknowledge that this page is far from being well written

"Isabella teaches me my lessons from ten till two every day and I wonder she is not tired to death with me for my part I would be quite Impatient if I had a child to teach

Still Naughty

"It was a dreadfull thing that Haman was hanged on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordica to hang him and his ten sons thereon & it was very wrong and cruel to hang his sons because they did not commit the crime but then Jesus was not then come to teach us to be Mercifull;

"Yesterday I behaved exceedingly ill & what is worse of all is when Isabella told me not to let my temper get the better of me but I did not mind her & and sinned away which was very naughty

"Yesterday the thunder bolts roled Mightily oer the hils it was very majestick but to Day there has been no thunder, but I will speak about another thing

"Yesterday I am very glad to say a young Cocker came to our house to stay, it is very beautiful and it is named Crakey it was Isabella that named him and white and black is its coualer but all the white will come of is not that wonderfull—This is Saturday, & I am very glad of it because I have play half of the day, & I get money too,—but alas, I owe Isabella 4 pence; for I am finned 2 pence whenever I bite my nails Isa is teaching me

to make Simecolings nots of interrigations peorids & commas &c. As this is Sunday I will meditate uppon senciable & Religious subjects first I should be very thankful I am not a beggar as many are

Many Talents

"I get my poetry now out of grey & I think it beautiful & Majestick but I am sorry to say that I think it is very difficult to get by heart but we must bear it well

"I hope that Isabella will have the goodness to teach me Geogrifie Mathematicks & Fractions &c,

"The Scythians tribe lives very coarsely for a Gluton Introdused to Arsaces the Captain of the army, 1 man who Dressed hair & another man who was a good cook but Arsaces said that he would keep 1 for brushing his horses tail, and the other to fead his pigs

"Dear Isa is very indulgent to me, for which usage I am sorrow to say, that I am always doing something or other ill, which is very naughty, is it not;

"It is malancholy to think, that I have so many talents, & many there are that have not had the attention paid to them that I

Disappointed Hopes

have, & yet they contrive to be better then me.

"Mrs Crakenit has a dog and I believe it is as beautiful as any in good old England, I am sure, & she had 5 pups, but they are all drowned but 1,

"Now am I quite happy, for I am going to-morrow to a delightfull place, Breahead by name, belonging to Mrs. Crraford, where there is ducks cocks hens bubbyjocks 2 dogs 2 cats and swine; which is delightful.

"I think it is shocking to think that the dog & cat should bear them & they are drowned after— I would rather have a man dog than a woman dog because they do not bear like women dogs, it is a hard case it is shocking,—

"I came here as I thought to enjoy natures delightful breath it is sweeter than a fial of rose oil but Alas my hopes are dissopointed, it always spitring but then I often get a blink & than I am happy

"Every Morn I awake before Isa & Oh I wish to be up & out with the larkies but I must take care of Isa who when aslipe is as beautiful as Viness & Jupiter in the skies;

"To Day I affronted myself before Miss Margaret and Miss Isa Craford and Mrs Craford & Miss Kermical which was very nauty but I hope that there will be no more evil in all my Journal

Forgetting God

"To Day

"To Day is Saturday & I sauntered about the woulds & by the burn side and dirtied myselfe which puts me in mind of a song my mother composed it was that she was out & dirtied herselfe which is like me:—

"I am very sorry to say that I forgot God that is to say I forgot to pray today & Isabella told me that I should be thankful that he did not forget me if he did O what would become of me if I was in danger and God not friends with me I I must go to unquenchable fire & if I was tempted to sin how could I resist it I will never do it again no no not if I can help it

"I am going to tell you of a melancholy story A young Turkie of 2 or 3 month old would you believe it the father broak its leg and he killed another I think he should be transported or hanged.

"Will the sarvent has buried the Turkie &

Good Resolutions

put a tomeston & written, this is in memory of the young Turke

"I am going to tell you that in all my life I never behaved so ill for when Isa bid me go out of the room I would not go & when Isa came to the room I threw my book at her in a dreadful passion & she did not lick me but said go into room and pray and I did it I will never do it again I hope that I will never afront Isa for she said that she was never so afronted in her life but I hope it will never happen again

"We expect Nancy tomorrow I am happy she is coming but I would be still happer if I behaved better but I will be better

"I got a young bird & I have tamed it & it hopes on my finger Alas I have promised it to Miss Bonner & the cage is here & little Dicky is in it it is

"How O how shall I receive Nancy after behaving so ill I tremble at it, it is dreadful to think of it, it is,

"I am going to turn over a new life & am going to be a very good girl & be obedient to Isa Keith, here there is planty of goosberys which makes my teath water,

Falling from Grace

"Yesterday there was campony Mr & Mrs Bonner & Philip Caddle who paid no little attention to me he took my hand and led me down stairs & shook my hand cordialy

"A sarvant tried to piosen mistress & 2, 3 children, what a dreadful concience she must have,

"Isabella is by far too indulgent to me & even the Miss Crafords say that they wonder at her patience with me & it is indeed true for my temper is a bad one

"My religion is greatly falling off because I dont pray with so much attention when I am saying my prayers and my character is lost a-mong the Breahead people I hope I will be religious agoin but as for regaining my charec-ter I despare for it,

"Isa bids me give you a note of the sarmon preached by Mr Bonner it was that we should ofer ourselves to God morning and evening & then we will be happy with God if we are good

"At Breahead there is a number of pictures & some have monstras large wigs

"everybody just now hates me & I deserve it for I dont behave well.

How to be Good

"I will never again trust in my own power for I see that I cannot be good without Gods assistence, I will never trust in my selfe and Isas health will be quite ruined by me it will indeed, I can never repay Isabella for what she has done but by good behave-our

"If I am good I will be happy but if I am bad I will be unhappy

"Isa has giving me advice which is that when I feal Satan begining to tempt me that I flea from him and he would flea from me.

"John is going to Queensferry to meet servent Willian, It is far better to behave better then ill

"Let me give you a note of the saren it is that if we are determined to be good & try to be so that we will always succeed for God when he seas that we are trying will assist us.

"Many people say that it is difficult to be good but is they will not try to do it

"The best way to be good is to pray to God to give us assistence if he gives us his assistence I can say that I will be good & we should never mind punishment if it is to do us good & it is better to have punishment if it is to save us from brimston & fire, We

God's help

are reading a book about a man who went into a house and he saw a sack & he went and look into it & he saw a dead body in it

"'*Marjorie must write no more journal till she writes better.*'—[? Isa Keith.]

Communications

Communications Communications

Communications

Expectations Forwardness s s

Expectations Forwardness s

"I know that if I try truly to be good God will healp me to be so & with his help alone can we behave well indeed it is true & every body will see so

"Nancy is too indulgent & as to Isa I would not find one like her though I was to search the world indeed people must say that or they will be false people but I do not think they will be so

m m m m u u u u u m m m n n

"This is Thursday & it was frosty but the sun shins n all its beauty it is very romantick indeed,—

A Victim to Remorse

"Isabella & Miss Isabella Craford walks to Baronbugal & jump with filisity over wals and fences,—

"Life is indeed prasious to those who are good because they are hapy & good indeed

"Remorse is the worst thing to bear & I am afraid that I will fall a marter to it when I am going to Kerkaldy & to my poor mother again I will tell you why it is that I have thrown away many advantages that others have not therefore I I think I will fall a victim to remorse;—

"There is four You, trees & Is sa caled 1 of them Lot & his wife"

Marjorie's journals are full of surprises. Her first fairly shimmered in the sunshine of happiness, of books, new acquaintances, new knowledge of places and things, new powers of body and mind to be exercised, love of friends and even delights of rhyme. But in this second journal there is not a scrap of poetry; very little about books, nothing of the beauties of nature; the landscape is ashen grey and the heavens are covered with a thick cloud.

"Sentiment"

The opening pages are bright enough, for the scene is still Braehead—Braehead the "delightfull," Braehead with the kindly company of farmyard beasts, its "you" trees without, and the walls within covered with portraits of ancestors wearing monstrous large wigs. Then comes Ravelston, another beloved spot; and amid these pleasant scenes our little Marjorie has an experience of what she calls "sentiment." Permitted to accompany a pleasure party to Craigiehall, the little girl gets a cavalier all to herself, and what with the promotion and the kindly attentions of her gallant companion, who walks with her "hand in hand in innocence and meditation sweet," the child's heart is overflowing with a pleasure which she describes in language borrowed from novels and poems. When Marjorie thinks she is in love, she puts it all in her journal and does not mince matters. The fact that her mother would probably see the journal by and by made it all the more necessary that the whole story should be told. Isa Keith, it is true, forbade her little charge to write about love, but who can remember the cold counsels of prudence when the heart

A Cry from the Depths

is too full? When a young lady of six and a half years considers herself a "loveress," or when she is led downstairs by a gentleman as if she were grown-up, and when he shakes her hand "cordialy," how can she help recording it all? Marjorie's sensitive nature felt within itself the uprising of new forces, and she frankly endeavoured to reveal her feelings in her own confessional.

But, alas! the first page of her journal, all aglow with her greatest outburst of emotion, is followed instantly by another page which is simply flooded with sorrow and remorse. Marjorie's cry from the depths of penitence and despair is in its own way, and, in view of her years, no less touching than the Confessions of St. Augustine. The intensity of the suffering is shown by the longing for punishment, for certain natures must have penance as some sort of defence from the burning arrows of the conscience. No doubt her experience was really due to some crisis in emotional development, common to most children, but very marked in Marjorie's case on account of her more fervid temperament, and comparable to growing pains in the physical frame.

A Struggle

Whatever its source, the disturbance that shook Marjorie's nature was naturally described as "temper." So Isa Keith named it, and Marjorie humbly acquiesced. Nor did Isa err in her treatment of the trouble. There were no angry scenes, no upbraiding, no punishment. Isa enlisted on her side Marjorie's good sense and self-respect and gratitude, and, indeed, the little Pet was always a good girl at heart, nay, absolutely in love with goodness as with beauty. Natural refinement and a conscience of extreme sensitiveness were on the whole more than a counterpoise to the violence of temper; but the struggle led to much mental anguish. Marjorie's penitence took on a deeper shade of darkness from religion. Scottish theology was never gloomier than at this period, and the view she had been taught to take of God is given in her own words: "God Almighty knows everything that we do or say and he can Kill you in a moment." In this religious atmosphere Marjorie's temper was no longer merely a humiliating want of self-control; it was Sin, and when her passion was at its worst it seemed to her that "she sinned away." The

Poor Little Warrior

same theology connected the whole derangement with Satan—"the same Divil that tempted Job," and in Marjorie's imaginative eyes an "awful spirit ' against which little girls were called on to "strive." What a subject for a poet—' The Child and the Devil!" What a picture Marjorie herself must have formed, "the Devil goes about like a roaring lyon in search of his pray." Following Isa Keith's advice, Marjorie resolved that on the approach of the evil spirit she would "flea him," but it was not so easy as it looked, and to her resolves never to offend she learned to add the saving clause, "No, no; not if I can help it." This caution was justified by the event. In vain she wrote down against herself the tale of her "naughtinesses," and then resolved to "turn over a new life." Poor little warrior against Apollyon! It was a cruel contest, and she was often defeated. She recognised that her "carecter" and her religion were alike lost, and although religion, as a more elastic material, might be largely restored, she rightly judged that character once gone is seldom recovered. One little sentence marks the very depth of Marjorie's

Ugly Sins

misery, "Everybody hates me just now and I deserve it." "I despare of it," she wrote. Poor child! Every person is said to meditate suicide at least once before the age of seventeen, but who ever heard of religious despair claiming a victim of seven? Around the giant evil of untamed passion, Marjorie was horrified to find other ugly sins growing up. Once at least she so far forgot her manners as to use unpolite language, an offence for which a previous dose of nauseous medicine was but a poor excuse. Worse still, she found that sometimes she forgot her daily prayers, and so ran the risk of being forgotten by God, or even committed to "unquenchable fire." In church she was inattentive—the strain was too great for the little hearer. At home she knew that, dismal as she was, it was her duty as a Scottish child to wear a double melancholy on the Sabbath day. "As this is Sunday I must begin to be serious," and when a little mite is going to be serious she becomes very solemn indeed. She would fain "improve her talents," but she can only think of wasted opportunities, exceptional advantages abused and talents thrown away. It was all

The Family Heritage

very "shoking" to an earnest little girl like Marjorie. Like many another traveller down this dolorous way she determined "never to trust in her own power" again, and she prayed for Divine assistance in repressing the disorderly forces within. We need not doubt that her prayers were answered, but for the present the poor child was often hopeless. Remorse, she said, was the worst thing to bear, and she was afraid she would "fall a marter to it." All she could look forward to was to explain to "her poor mother" in Kirkcaldy how she had failed, and then just "fall a victim to remorse."

Marjorie did not know that the poor mother herself when a little girl had a "shoking" temper. It was part of the family heritage; and so also was the "remorse." Marjorie's sister, who died as recently as 1881, returned on one occa ion from a visit to her friends in Edinburgh, and handed her maid a number of presents, remarking, "This is from So-and-so, and this from So-and-so, and this is for my temper!"

That Marjorie's troubles grew naturally from the intensity of her nature, one may

Vigorous Language

gather from her grasp of vigorous language. "Roar like a bull," "the most Devilish thing," "What nature itselfe cant endure," "the delight of my soul" "your beloved letters," and such like highly coloured expressions show that Marjorie's ailment was by no means mental anæmia. How often does she use the adjective majestic—"majestic pride," "majestic pleasure," "majestic thunder," "majestic poetry"!

The only poet named in this journal is Gray, whose *Elegy* was in harmony with the general sombreness of Marjorie's condition, and the best she can say of his poetry is that "we must bear it well." The ancient Scythians seem to have replaced the Scots as the subjects for historical readings, and the Bible study centred in the Book of Esther. It might shock the writer of that work if he knew that Marjorie had not a thought for Mordecai and his compatriots. Feminine tenderness, alas! is as uncertain as it is precious, and sometimes foolishly flows out to the villain in place of to the hero. Marjorie wept no tear for the Jews, but was distressed by the hanging of Haman and his

A Few Gems

ten sons. The change of victims on the special gallows spoke to her only of wickedness and cruelty, and conveyed none of the joy and triumph designed by the Jewish narrator.

We miss in this journal the curious words that so often charm us in Marjorie's other writings, but there are a few gems, as when she remarks of a fine day that "it is very romantick"; tells us that the thunderbolts "roled mightily oer the hills," compares her sleeping Isa to "Viness and Jupiter in the skies," and the breath of summer to "a fial of rose oil," and describes Isa and Miss Craufurd as "jumping with filisity over walls and fences."

Isa Keith was all the time the most impressive personality to little Marjorie, and she is never weary of admiring her graciousness. "She was as gental as a lamb." Even when "her blood ran cold" at the sight of Marjorie's naughtiness, Isa merely ordered her to another room to pray. Marjorie wonders that Isa is not tired to death, and fears that "her health will be ruined" by her exhausting efforts to guide the little cousin.

Isa really devoted much time and care to

Ambitious Longings

Marjorie, teaching her from ten o'clock till two in such subjects as writing, spelling, punctuation, grammar, and arithmetic, with "religion into the bargan." While recording that the multiplication table was a "wretched plaege," Marjorie rather inconsistently longed to be taught mathematics and fractions, astronomy and geography, for she hoped to be as learned as her cousins when she reached the age of thirteen or fourteen—an age, alas! she was not destined to see.

At Braehead Marjorie slept with Isa and was proud to be allowed to do so, but lacking the placidity of Isa's nature, she could not sleep so soundly nor so long. In the early morning she lay awake, longing to be "up with the larkies," but afraid to stir lest she should disturb the sleeping beauty by her side. It is said that no one is a hero to his valet, but to her little bedfellow Isa Keith was the very personification of goodness and beauty, and she did not hesitate to compare her to the brightest stars in the sky.

During the autumn months covered by this journal Marjorie found but few passing events worthy of record. There were two tragedies

Farmyard Tragedies

of the farmyard to perplex her loving heart. One was the drowning of the puppies, which caused her to think it strange and sad that their mother should bear them only to be drowned "after all." It was as Marjorie said, "shocking to think of it," and her childish mind puzzled how to prevent occurrences which raised such awful problems of death and destiny. The other tragedy was the death of a young turkey whose father killed it. Remembering the case of James Macary, Marjorie thought this turkey murderer ought to be hanged or transported. Another sad event was the attempt by a domestic servant to poison her mistress and the children, on which Marjorie, who suffered so much remorse for much more venial sins, remarks, "What a conscience she must have!"

Marjorie's brighter self is ever present in her love for animals. Braehead the beautiful was made still dearer "by the company of swine, geese, and cocks," and other lowly folk that were "the delight of her heart." Her fondness for birds and beasts lends a particular pathos to the story of Dicky, which is little more than hinted at in the journal. She

got the bird when quite young, she trained it herself, it had learned to hop on her finger, and then in obedience to a sudden kindly impulse she promised to give her little pet as a gift to the clergyman's daughter. The c ge arrived for it, little Dicky was placed inside, and poor Madgie crushed down her feelings as she bade her little playfellow farewell. Her reticence about the sadness of this parting does her honour. She was acquiring "self-control."

Marjorie's Birthright

But there was one grace she never needed to acquire, for it was her birthright—a royal largeness of heart, full of pity for all things great and small. No one, no matter how apparently superior to her in age or rank, was beyond Madgie's compassion. See how frequent on her lips is the caressing, comforting adjective "poor." Poor Job the Patriarch, "Poor Mary Queen of Scots," "My poor mother in Kirkcaldy," "Poor Isa," "Poor turkeys," and "Poor, poor Emily." Only a child, conscious of her own large heritage, could afford to bestow so much loving pity on others.

Was Marjorie's mother also a poetess? It

Mistaken Notions

is not improbable. A lady whose sister and daughter were both endowed with a certain amount of poetic feeling and ability might share in their gifts. But it is just as likely that Maidie was mistaken in supposing that her mother actually composed the song of which she sang some snatches. It may have been the Scottish verse:

> My mother sent me to the well,
> Better she had ga'en hersel';
> Broke the jar an' filed mysel',
> An' whistled o'er the lave o't.

For in her first letter the child attributed to her cousin William (or was it her brother?) the invention of the word "birsay," which nevertheless had long had a place in the vocabulary of the Scottish dialect. *Birse* is the English *bristle*, and to be birsie is to bristle up, as a fiery little personage like our Marjorie was rather liable to do.

The frequent tragedies within and without, the vision of unquenchable fire and brimstone, and even the gruesome story of the dead body found sewn in a sack, affected Marjorie's nerves, and her handwriting, in-

An Abrupt Stop

stead of improving, began to degenerate. At this stage the journal came to an abrupt stop, for across the top was written in a neat, lady-like hand, the line, "Marjory must write no more journal till she writes better." Accordingly the remaining space is chiefly devoted to monotonous repetitions of "Expectations" and "Communications." The over-bright mind had to go to sleep so that the child's hand might acquire a command of penmanship.

It was early in 1810, when Marjorie was just seven years old, that she was presented with her third journal, and during the following weeks and months she filled it up as follows:

"Many people are hanged for Highway robbery House breking Murder &c &c

"Isabella teaches me every thing I know I am much indebted to her she is learn & witty & sensible. I can but make a poor reward for the servises she has done me if I can give her any but I doubt it repent be wise saith the teacher before it be to late Regency bonnets are become very fashionable of late & every

A Page at a Time

gets them save poor me. A Mirtal is a beautiful plant so is a Geramem & Nettel Geramem

"Climbing is a talent which the bear excels in and so does monkey apes & baboons I have been washing my dools cloths to day & I like it very much people who have a good Concience is always happy but those who have a bad one is always unhappy & discontented.

"There is a dog that yels continualy & I pity him to the bottom of my heart indeed I do. Tales of fashionable life are very good storys Isabella compels me to sit down & not to rise till this page is done but it is very near finished only one line to write.

"Yesterday the thunder roared & now and then flashes of lightning was seen to-day but to-day there is no such thing & far from it, for it is very warm sunny & mild. The Monkey gets as many visitors as For my cousins. Nobody can be happy that has guilt on his mind.

"Grandeur and Magnificence makes one Proud & Insolent Peevish & petish these make us miserable & unhappy besides people will hate us & abhor us & dispise us We should get the better of our passion & not let then get the better of us.

Virtue Effects Looks

"Osian's poems are most beautiful I am very strong and robust & not of the delicate sex

"Nor of the fair but of the deficent in looks.

"People who are deficient in looks can make up for it by virtue I am very fond of the Arabian nights entertainments & wish to read the tales of the Genie. Silver & Gould is presous I am fair as the sun & beautiful as the moon. I hear many people speak about the Exebition an I long very much to behold it but I have to little money to pay the expence. Queen streat is a very gay one & so is Princes streat for all the lads and lases besides bucks and begars parade there. Tomsons him to the seasons is most elegant & most beautifull & so is young Celidon and his Emelia but is melancholy and distressing poor man his fate was a dismale he was an unhappy lover Mr Burn writs a beautifull song on Mr Cunhaming whose wife deserted him truly it is a most beautifull one

"I like to read the Fabulous historys about the historys of Robin Dickey flapsay & Peccay & it is very amuseing for some were good

A Burst of Anger

birds and others bad Peccay was the most dutifull & obedient to her parents I went into Isabellas bed to make her smile like the Genius Demedicus or the statute in ancient Grece but she fell asleep in my very face at which my anger broke forth so that I awoke her from a very comfortable nap all was now hushed up but again my anger burst forth at her bidding me get up I have read in the history of Scotland how Murry the regent was shot by Hamilton of Bothwell-haugh but Murry used Hamiltons wife very ill & drove her quite mad but Hamilton should have left Murry's punishment to God Almighty for revenge is a very very bad thing & aught not to be done

"Many people are so sinful as to steal and murder, but they have punishment either from God or men in this world or the next.

"In the New whole duty of men that says that says that familly prayer should be well attended to I should like to see a play very much for I never saw one in all my life & don't believe I ever shall but I hope I can be content without going to one I can be quite hapy without my desire be granted

A Ghostly Figure

People should set others an exampal of doing good for every body is happy that doeth good

"Nancys and Isabellas uncle has got musical Glases & and the sound of them is exceeding sweet The poetical works of tomas Grey are most beautifull especially one the death of a favourite cat who was drowned in a Tub of fishes. When books are funy and amuseing I am very fond of them such as the arabian nights entertaintments & the tales of the Castal &c &c Every body should be unasuming and not asuming We should regard virtue but not vice for that leads us to distriction & makes us unhappy all our life

"Some days ago Isabella had a terrable fit of the toothake and she walked with a long nightshift at dead of night like a gost and I thought she was one Sha prayed for tired natures sweet restorer bamy sleep but did not get it a ghostly figure she was indeed enough to make a saint tremble it made me quever & sheke from top to toe but I soon got the better of it & and next morning I quite forgot it Superstition is a very mean thing & should be dispised & shuned

"An adress to my father when he came to

The Bliss of Solitude

Edinburgh My father from Kircaldy came but not to plunder or to game Gameing he shuns I am very sure He has a heart that is very pure

"Honest & well behaved is he
And busy as a little Bee

"I am very fond of some parts of Tomsons seasons I like loud Mirement & laughter.

"I love to walk in lonely solitude & leave the bustel of the nosey town behind me & while I look on nothing but what strikes the eye with sights of bliss & then I think myself trinsported far beyond the reach of the wicked sons of men where there is nothing but strife & envying pilfering & murder where neither contentment nor retirement dwells but there dwells drunkeness—

"Beautious Isabella say
How long at breahead will you stay
O for a week or not so long
Then weel desart the busy throng
Ah can you see me sorrow so
And drop a hint that you must go
I thought you had a better hart
Then make me with my dear friends part

Interesting Reading

But now I see that you have not
And that you mock my dreadful lot
My health is always bad and sore
And you have hurt it a deal more

"The reason I write this poem is because I am going to Breahead only two days

"I like to here my own sex praised but not the other The vision is most beautiful Breahead is a beautiful place & on a charming situation I should like to see the Exhibition very much & still more so the theater

"I am reading the misteries of udolpho with Isabella & am much interested with them I have got some of Popes works by hart & like them very much the days are very long and very light just now which is very pleasant to me & I darsay to every body.

"I should like to go and see the curosities in London but I should be a little affraid of the robbers For that country is greatly infested with them at Edinburgh their is not so many of them Their is a very nice book called The Monk & the vinedreser written by a lady but I do not know her name

Mary Queen of Scots

"It is true that

"Death the righteous love to see
But from it doth the wicked flee

"I am sure they fly as fast as their legs can carry them

"My cousin John has a beautiful musaim & he has got many nice curiosities

"Macbeth is a fearful play. I pityed Mary Queen of Scots when the people held a standard on which was painted the dead King and his son kneeling and uttering these words judge & revenge my cause O Lord I should not liked to have been her but I think it was very wrong in the people to mock their sovereign & queen I have seen her picture & I think her most beautiful & Angelick Elisbeth behaved very crually too poor Mary

"Today O today I am going to Breahead but alas my pleasure will be soon damped for I must come home in too days but I wish to stay too months or more for I am very fond of the country and could stay at Breahead all my life There the wind houles to the waves dashing roar but I would not weep my woes there upon any account

Summer Sunshine

"To days ago was the King's birthday
And to his health we sung a lay
Poor man his health is very bad
And he is often very mad
He was a very comely lad
Since death took his girl from his sight
He to her grave doth walk at night
His son the grand grand Duke of York
I am sure he eateth plenty pork
For I do hear that he is fat
But I am not so sure of that

"Of summer I am very fond
And love to baithe into a pond
The look of sunshine dies away
And will not let me out to play
I love the morning sun to see
That makes from the house to flee
I love the morning sun to spy
Glittring through the casements eye
The rays of light are very sweet
And puts away our taste of meat

"My lover Isa walks with me
And then we sing a pretty glee
My lover I am sure shes not
But we are content with our lot

Beautiful Trees

"Often I have heard people say
In the right path I love to stray
But wickedness I cannot bear
To walk with it I will not dare

"The trees do wave their lofty heads while the winds stupenduous breath wafts the scattered leaves afar off besides the declifities of the rocks leaves that once was green and beautiful now withered and wed away scatering their remains on the footpaths and high-roads &c &c

"The balmy brease comes down from heaven
And makes us like for to be liveing
But when we think that if we died
No pleasure there would be denied
There happiness doth always reign
And there we feel not a bit pain

"In the morning the first thing I see is most beautiful trees spreading their luxurant branches between the Horison & me

"There is a thing I love to see
That is our monkey catch a flee
With looks that shows that he is proud

He gathers round him such a crowd
But if we scold him he will grin
And up he'll jump and make a din—

Perfect Contentment

"I love to see the morning sun that rise so long before the moon the moon that casts her silver light when the Horison sinks beneath the clouds and scateres its light on the surface of the earth Here at Breahead I enjoy rurel filisity to per-fection, content, retirement, rurel friend-ship books, all these dwell here but I am not sure of ease and alternate labour useful life

"I love in Isa's bed to lie
O such a joy and luxury
The bottom of the bed I sleep
And with great care I myself keep
Oft I embrace her feet of lillys
But she has goton all the pillies
Her neck I never can embrace
But I do hug her feet in place
But I am sure I am contented
And of my follies am repented
I am sure I'd rather be
In a small bed at liberty.

Jessie Watson

Emily [1]

"At Breahead I lay at the foot of the bed because Isabella says that I disturbed her repose at night by contunial fgtting and kicking but I was very continialy at work reading the Arabin nights entertainments which I could not have done had I slept at the top. I am reading the Mysteries of udolpho & am much interested in the fate of poor poor

I am sure I'd rather be
In a small bed at liberty

"ON JESSY WATSON'S ELOPEMENT

"Run of is Jessy Watson fair
Her eyes do sparkel she's good hair
But Mrs Leath you shall now be
Now and for all Eternity
Such merry spirits I do hate
But now its over and to late
For to retract such vows you cant
And you must now love your galant
But I am sure you will repent

[1] These lines Marjorie wrote upside down to show that they were an explanatory footnote. They were written in after the rest of the journal had been filled up.

And your poor heart will then relant Phillip
Your poor poor father will repine
And so would I if you were mine
But now be good for this time past
And let this folly be your last

" Our hills & dales fair Phillip strayes
And he doth walk through all the ways
He and myselfe are lovers true
We can feel pangs as well as you
Those that feel pangs are not so few
We walked upon the distant hills
And often goes into the mills
Very soft & white his cheeks
His hair is fair & grey his breaks
His teath is like the daisy fair
The only fault is on his hair
I am beginning to be jealous
And feel a small degree of malice
That kindles in my bosom fair
And fills my heart with great despair
Ah man you said you once loved me
But from your promises you flee

"The sun is seen glimering through the trees whose spreading foliage allows only a

When the Wind Blows

slight tinge to be seen, it is a beautiful sight In the dining room & drawing at Breahead The walls are hung with the pictures of there ancestors both men and weomen The hedges are green the trees are green and every thing bears a pleasure to the eye when we look on them

"There is some beautiful trees behind the house & before the house which makes it very

"I have been a Naughty Girl
"I have been a Naughty Girl

"The lofty trees their heads do shake
When the wind blows a noise they make
When they are cut a crash you hear
That fills your very soul with fear
Tis like the thunders loudest roar
You would not like to hear much more
It makes the earth begin to quake
And all its mity pillers shake
The viabration of the sound
Will I am sure you quite confound
It makes the mountains to resound

DEDICATED TO MRS H. CRAWFURD BY THE AUTHOR—M F

A Barnyard Calamity

"Three turkeys fair their last have breathed
And now this world for ever leaved
Their Father & their Mother too
Will sigh and weep as well as you
Mourning for their osprings fair
Whom they did nurse with tender care
Indeed the rats their bones have cranched
To eternity are they launched
There graceful form and pretty eyes
Their fellow fows did not despise
A direful death indeed they had
that would put any parent mad
But she was more then usual calm
She did not give a single dam
She is as gentel as a lamb
Here ends this melancholy lay
Farewell Poor Turkeys I must say

"Tis eve the wind is very boisterous the sea must be very tempestious while the waves montain high dashes on the ships side overturns it & launches the crew into eternity

" I love to see the mornings light
That glitters through the trees so bright

At a Fair

Its splended rays indeed full sweet
And takes away our tast of meat
I love to see the moon shine bright
It is a very nobel sight
Its worth to sit up all the night
But I am going to my tea
And what I'v said is not a lee.

"Poor Williams gone to Giffords fair
To see the things that are seen there
I'm sure he will be much amused
For to such things he is not used
There lads and & lasses he will see
Dressed as gay as can well be

"I have often been at a fair & am always very much interested and amused with it there are always a great concorse of people at it Here I pas my life in rurel filicity festivity & pleasure I saunter about the woods and forests Breahead is far far sweeter then Edinburgh or any other place Every thing is beautiful some colour is red others green & white &c &c but the trees & hedges are the most beautiful for they are of the most pretty green I ever beheld in all my life

"Goodness of hart gentelness & meekness

On Prayer

makes one beloved & respected by those who are acquainted with them but pride insolence and bad hartedness is always hated and despised it is better to follow after the first then after the last for the first is good and the last is bad

"Of sauntering about the doors I am very fond especially when it is a fine & sunny day. I am very fond of spring Summer & Autum but I am not so fond of winter tor then it is cold & dreary Isabella says that when we pray we should pray fervently & not rattle over a prayer when our thoughts are wandering but to collect our thoughts for that we are kneeling at the footstool of our Lord & creator who we ought to respect honour & obey due revirance & fear he created us & he may take away our blisings if he pleaes He showers down blessings on our heads when we least deserve them & forgives our sins & forgetfulness of him our Lord & creator who saved us from mesiry & eternal damnation from unquestionable fire & brimston he saved us

"When cold as clay when cold as ice
To get into a bed tis nice

Isa

It is a nice thing for to creep
But not do dose away & sleep
Into a bed where Isa lies
And to my questions she replies
Corrects my faults improves my mind
And tells me of the faults she find
But she is sound asleep sometimes
For that I have not got good rimes
But when awake I her teize much
And she doth squall at every touch
Then Isa reads in bed alone
And reads the fasts by good Nelson
Then I get up to say my prayers
To get my porridge & go down stairs"

The climate of the third journal differs entirely from that of the second. References to books read and to passing events are many, the enjoyment of nature is again prominent, and original poems are numerous. Marjorie is herself again. Her reading includes the works of two old favourites, Gray and Thomson, and three new ones—Burns, Pope, some of whose lines she can repeat by heart, and Ossian, whom she does not venture to quote. Gray's lines *On a Favourite Cat Drowned in a*

Marjorie's Reading

Tub of Gold Fishes caught the girl's fancy, and Thomson's *Hymn on the Seasons* gratified her taste for lofty thoughts and beautiful language. The other poem by Thomson impressed her still more:

> Young Celadon
> And his Amelia were a matchless pair,
> With equal virtue formed and equal grace;
> Hers the mild lustre of the blooming morn,
> And his the radiance of the risen day.

It was beautiful but most distressing, Marjorie thought. Though no longer a believer in fairy tales, Marjorie enjoyed equally Mrs. Trimmer's *Fabulous Histories*, that recorded the doings and sayings of birds, and the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*. One of her cherished books was the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, a sensational romance of the Kotzebue type, written by Mrs. Radcliffe and published in 1794. The other stories now read included *The Monk and the Vine Dresser* and *Tales of the Castle;* and another by her favourite author, Miss Edgeworth, *Tales of Fashionable Life*.

In the use of words Marjorie now showed a great advance. Deriving keen enjoyment

Feminine Touches

from beautiful language, she loves to get a poetical term, such as "horizon," and play with it. Her little slips in the use, and still more in the spelling, of words—for example, "unquestionable fire and brimston"—remind us with pathetic force that after all the would-be moralist and theologian is but a child trying on the religious clothes of her grown-up friends.

The outward glances in this journal are more feminine than in the earlier writings. "Regency Bonnets," no doubt named from the Regency arranged on account of the health of George III., had come into vogue, and the little girl in Charlotte Street would dearly love to possess one, only she could not afford it. "If I had one it would not become me," soliloquised the young philosopher. The fashionable parade in Princes Street and Queen Street of Edinburgh, with its mingling of rich and poor, attracted her, and she would have been in raptures if allowed to visit "the Exhibition." The Exhibition was a collection of paintings by Scottish artists placed on view in Edinburgh. It was opened on 9th April, 1810, and was long the chief topic in

Unfulfilled Desires

cultured circles. Marjorie could not afford the expense of going to see the pictures, and she had therefore to be content with a view of her cousin John's "Musaim," which she tells us contained "nice curiosities." Like every true child Marjorie had many longings. More than once she wrote that she would love to see a play acted in a theatre. She had never seen one "in all my life," a favourite phrase on her lips, and one of sad significance when we remember that she was destined to die before the end of her ninth year. She said she had never seen a play, and then with sad foreboding she added that she did not believe she ever would see one, and she would therefore be content. The fame of the "grandeur" and "curiosities" of London had also excited Marjorie's desires to see that "capital town," but this also was to be denied her, and with a fine blending of philosophy and childish timorousness she told herself that after all she would have been afraid of robbers in London, "for that country is greatly infested with them—in Edinburgh we have not so many of them." Poor Londoners! Our Pet must have felt a great

Gaining Self-Control

pity for them far away from the security of life and property which men enjoyed in Edinburgh, and still farther from the homely safety of Kirkcaldy.

Marjorie's love of nature and the outdoor world is keener and happier than ever—"of sauntering about the doors I am very fond," "I am very fond of summer and autumn" "I pass my life in rural felicity," such is the sweet refrain of her thoughts.

Of course there are still faint signs of the old explosiveness of her nature, but she can keep herself in hand with quiet good humour. "My anger again broke forth" is her half poetical, half playful, description of her passing annoyance when Isabella "fell asleep in her very face." When ordered to a certain task Madgie no longer "stamps with her feet," but with cheerful and almost frolicsome obedience writes—"Isabella compels me to sit down and not rise till this page is done, but it is very near finished only one line to write."

One night Marjorie awoke at midnight and was surprised to see a tall figure in white wandering about the room. It was her cousin

The Wicked Flee

Isa, distracted by toothache, but Marjorie, calling to mind various stories of ghosts, thought it "a sight to make a saint tremble," adding naïvely, "it made *me* quiver from top to toe." Next day, in the full light of sunshine, she took revenge on her fears by writing down boldly—"Superstition is a very very mean thing and should be despised and shunned."

Ever and anon Marjorie comes back to religious statements such as, "I am sure that death the righteous love to see, But from it doth the wicked flee: I am sure they fly as fast as their legs can carry them." There is now a quiet chuckle in the philosopher's throat when repeating the most solemn statements received from her friends. There was a hint of it in a previous reference to her lessons in Multiplication and Religion. It was still more marked in her list of subjects of instruction—reading, writing, and arithmetic, and many other things—religion into the bargain. But here it is heard plainly out at the idea of the wicked skipping along as fast as their legs could carry them.

Isa is the subject of a new poem in these

Poetical Vein

pages—the pretty lines beginning, "I love in Isa's bed to lie." There was a small blank space in the journal at the foot of the poem, and here Marjorie wrote the explanation given in the text. She wrote it upside down to show that it was only a footnote! Love for Isa is the one changeless theme of Marjorie's thoughts. In darkness or in light, in sorrow or joy, Isa is always the beloved, the "learned witty and sensible," "one of our beauties just now," the benefactress whose services can never be repaid, the Venus de Medici, fair as a Greek statue.

The present journal is fairly crowded with happy bits from our girl poet. Her father went to Edinburgh to see her, and she devotes to him a poem of six lines, ending, "Honest and well behaved is he, and busy as a little bee"—an industrious little father!

But Marjorie could write poetical thoughts in prose. She liked to fondle a sentimental fancy for sequestered shades, turning her back on the "bustel of the nosey town," in order to "walk in lonely solitude." Braehead of all places arouses this poetical vein, for it has every kind of rustic loveliness, and not far

Scott's "Rosabelle"

off is the Firth of Forth, where she could listen to the "howl of the wind" and the "dashing roar" of the waves. It was Marjorie's friend, Walter Scott, who portrayed, on a larger poetic canvas, the same "Stormy Firth" in his ballad of *Rosabelle:*

> The blackening wave is edged with white,
> To inch and rock the sea mews fly;
> The fishers have heard the water sprite,
> Whose screams forebode that wreck is nigh.

And, by the bye, was not Rosabelle, like our Maidie, a Kirkcaldy girl, whose attempted passage from Castle Ravensheuch in the Lang Toun to the Edinburgh side had such a woeful issue:

> The sea caves rung and the wild winds sung
> The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

Braehead was everything to Marjorie—"rural filisity," "content, retirement," "friendship books." It is only amid the trees of Braehead that she can sing:

> I have been a naughty girl,
> I have been a naughty girl.
> The lofty trees their heads do shake,
> When the wind blows a noise they make.

Brimming Over with Happiness

And it was love of Braehead that inspired the earnest if not very lofty poem beginning, "Beautious Isabella, say how long at Braehead will you stay?"

Marjorie's happiness brims over in what may be called her own poem, beginning, "Of summer I am very fond," a glad hymn in which Nature and Isa Keith are equally praised. Marjorie's trick of mental balancing and rapid correction of her statements is shown in almost every page. In the poem before us she says, "My lover Isa walks with me," but as this might seem to imply too much, she quickly adds:

> My lover I am sure she's not,
> But I'm contented with my lot.

The loyal ode on the King's birthday was suggested by the jubilee of the accession of George III., which took place in the summer of 1810, and was celebrated in Edinburgh with great splendour. The poem reproduces fairly enough current opinions, but our Maidie was too outspoken to be poet-laureate. She herself did not take the matter seriously, for she breaks off the poem, as she often did others, with a jest.

Marjorie and Sir Walter Scott.
(*From the title-page of Farnie's "Pet Marjorie."*)

Spiritual and Material

Popular religious notions and popular usage in religious terms led Marjorie to mix up curiously the spiritual and the material worlds. Probably all children do so, but only Marjorie could show us in verse so very strange a result. With the exuberant joy of healthy childhood she revelled in the sweet summer air, which comes down from heaven —from heaven, where everything is pleasant and good, and so follows a meditation on celestial happiness. Plainly the girl's religion was again a happy one. We no longer hear of "God who can kill you in a moment," but God who "showers down blessings on our heads."

Marjorie is, however, on safer ground when describing the antics of her aunt's monkey, a subject more likely to interest a child; and it is with a start of surprise and joy that we catch her actually washing her doll's clothes and enjoying an action which is so unlike an author! And yet—and yet we have just been looking at the dainty wee table and the little stool that formed part of the furniture at Marjorie's dolls' parties.

There is no lack of variety in our young

"Fair Philip"

author's subjects. Who but she would have selected for poetic treatment the elopement of a servant lass? Who but she, from the height of her seven years of age, would reprove the erring Jessie with the words:

> Your poor poor father will repine
> And so would I if you were mine.

Nor could the rash runaway charge Marjorie with inexperience in such matters, for without a pause the lively maiden proceeds to sing of one of her own lovers. We know not if "fair Philip" was real or imaginary—very real, one may well suppose, since his hair, his clothing, and his teeth, are so minutely described. Despite her objections to the sunny gleam in his locks, "his only fault," the little poet, following the example of some poetic love-lorn maid, tries to work herself into a jealous frenzy over the supposed fickleness of her swain. Children love to exercise, or pretend to exercise, every emotion in the life that is so new to them, just as a poor man might explore every part of a new inheritance. That Marjorie did not let the iron of jealousy sink deeply into her soul is evident from the

Lament for Three Turkeys

ease with which she breaks off her reproaches to tell us that "the sun is seen glimmering through the trees."

The lament for the three turkeys, it is to be feared, will become the most famous of all Pet Marjorie's "poems," because of the unusual vigour of its language. Following the exalted diction of her favourite poets, Marjorie makes all her subjects "fair," whether they be men or women or turkeys, and "their fellow fowls" is reminiscent of the literary language of the period. With a touch of poetic insight, Marjorie insists that her subjects, animal or human, are all swayed by the same feelings as her readers—"they sigh and weep as well as you." No doubt there is an apparent inconsistency in this case, where the unnatural mother of the departed turkeys emitted no sigh nor let a single tear roll down her beak, but her callousness was one of the saddest parts of the tragedy. Having invested her fowls with human feelings, Marjorie does not shrink from giving them a human fate—they have left this world for ever, their souls are "launched into eternity," and the mind, following their mysterious

The Little Student

destiny there, is vaguely disturbed by the noisy cranching of their bones here.

This anthology ends appropriately with Marjorie's description of her mornings, creeping into the warm bed where her sleeping Isa lies, teasing her awake, enjoying her improving conversation, and finally leaving her cousin "reading the fasts," while she herself says her prayers, gets her porridge, and goes downstairs. A dear little girl is our Marjorie.

About this time her cousin wrote to Marjorie's sister in Kirkcaldy a description of the little student. Marjorie herself had been writing home offering her sister an orange which she had got from a friend, and Miss Keith wrote:

"I hope you will excuse the shortness of Maidie's letter, and trusting to a longer one from her soon, accept a few lines from me instead. She is going on very briskly with her lessons, in all of which she is, I hope, improving, except her Musick. She dislikes it so much that she loses all patience, but I hope when she gets the length of playing a tune she will like it better and pay more attention to it.

A Happy Child

"She is very fond of history, and is reading the *History of Scotland* at present, in which she is much interested.

"She continues her journal every day entirely by herself. It is a very amusing production indeed, and when finished I shall send it over for your mother's perusal, and I hope you will find it more correct and better written than the last.

"I have almost entirely given up her dancing, as it took up a great deal too much time, and a few lessons a year or two after this will do her infinitely more good.

"She is grown excessively fat and strong, but I cannot say she is in great beauty, as she has lost two front teeth, and her continual propensity to laugh exhibits the defect rather unbecomingly."

Our child genius was thus by no means "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," but a strong, plump, laughing little girl.

It was chiefly during this period in Marjorie's little life that she was thrown into the company of Walter Scott, and made a deep impression on his appreciative nature. He

A Magnetic Bond

himself testified that he was amazed at her power over him, saying to Mrs. Keith, "She's the most extraordinary creature I ever met with, and her repeating of Shakespeare overpowers me as nothing else does."

Marjorie had been spending the summer at Ravelston, where Scott also had spent many a happy holiday in his boyhood, and that of itself was a bond between them. Mrs. Keith of Ravelston was his grand-aunt, and Marjorie's aunt, Marianne, was married to Mrs. Keith's son William. But there was also the older tie of the intimacy of Marjorie's mother with Scott when they were playmates, nearly thirty years before. To Marjorie Scott was an interesting mystery, for she read and enjoyed his poems, he was learned in just the kind of lore that she liked best, and yet he could often pretend to be very stupid.

Nor was Marjorie less of a revelation and a puzzle to Scott. Her combination of childlike notions with literary tastes and capacities, and, above all, her simple, innocent, loving nature, drew the greatest Scotsman of the age like a magnet.

Learning Nursery Rhymes

Scott's house in Edinburgh was quite near that of Maidie's aunt, and they saw much of each other. Marjorie taught him many nursery rhymes, and when he pretended to great difficulty, she rebuked him with most comical gravity, treating him as a child. As Dr. Brown records:

"He used to say when he came to Alibi Crackaby he broke down. Pin-Pan, Musky-Dan, Tweedle-um, Twodle-um, made him roar with laughter. He said Musky-Dan especially was beyond endurance, bringing up an Irishman and his hat fresh from the Spice Islands and odoriferous Ind; she getting quite bitter in her displeasure at his ill behaviour and stupidness. Then he would read ballads to her in his own glorious way, the two getting wild with excitement over *Gil Morrice*, or the *Baron of Smailholm*, and he would take her on his knee and make her repeat Constance's speeches in *King John*, till he swayed to and fro sobbing his fill."

The following little sketch from Dr. Brown's picturesque pages describes our Marjorie in the centre of her court:

The Centre of Attraction

"The year before she died, when in Edinburgh, she was at a Twelfth Night supper at Scott's, in Castle Street. The company had all come—all but Marjorie; and all were dull because Scott was dull. 'Where's that bairn? What can have come over her? I'll go myself and see!' and he was getting up, and would have gone, when the bell rang, and in came Duncan Roy and his henchman Dougal, with the Sedan chair, which was brought right into the lobby, and its top raised. And there in its darkness and dingy old cloth sat Maidie in white, her eyes gleaming, and Scott bending over her in ecstasy—'hung over her enamoured.' 'Sit ye there, my dautie, till they all see you,' and forthwith he brought them all. You can fancy the scene. And he lifted her up and marched to his seat with her on his stout shoulder, and set her down beside him; and then began the night, and such a night. Those who knew Scott best said, that night was never equalled. Maidie and he were the stars; and she gave them Constance's speeches, and *Helvellyn*—the ballad much in vogue—and all her repertoire, Scott showing her off, and being

Marjorie's Magnum Opus

ofttimes rebuked by her for his intentional blunders."

It is a striking picture, like nothing else in literature. The flower of cultured Edinburgh were present, and in the centre, admired by all, were the great novelist and our little heroine—the ripe litterateur of thirty-eight and the child of seven!

Marjorie's fourth journal contains the most ambitious work she had yet undertaken—a rhymed history of Mary Queen of Scots. In its strange mingling of cleverness and childish limitations the poem contains food for serious reflection, as well as for enjoyment. Still more striking would it appear if we were able to show the little girl's own copy, with her careful corrections of spelling and Isa Keith's occasional marks. Did ever epic poet attempt to ride the winged Pegasus under such trying conditions?

"THE LIFE OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.
BY M. F.

"Poor Mary Queen of Scots was born
With all the graces which adorn
Her birthday is so very late

Mary's Return to Scotland

That I do now forget the date
Her education was in france
There she did learn to sing and dance
There she was married to the dauphin
But soon he was laid in a coffin
Then she at once from France retired
Where she had been so much admired
Fare well dear france she cried at last
While a desparing look she cast
The nobels came to meet there Queen
Whom they before had never seen
They never saw a face so fair
For there is no such beauties there
That with her they could compair
She was a Roman Catholic strong
Nor did she think that it it was wrong
But they her faith could not well bear
And to upbraid her they would dare
There was a man who was quite good
To preach against her faith he would
His name was John Knox a reformer
Of Mary he was a great scorner
Her nation was so very feirce
That they your very hart could peirce
In love she fell and deap it was
Lord Darnly was the very cause

Darnley and Rizzio

Anobels son a handsome lad
By some queer way or other had
Got quite the better of her hart
With him she always talked apart
Silly he was but very fair
A greater buck was not found there
He was quite tall & slender too
And he could dance as well as you
Soon was the nupsials done & ore
Of it there was said nothing more
They lived togeather for a while
And happiness did there time beguile
Mary was charmed with a player
Of whom she took a great great care
He fed upon the finest fair
He was her greatest favourite
Him she caressed with all her might
She gave him food she gave him wine
When he was gone she would repine
The king heard this with anger sore
This is not all there is much more
For he did murder the poor player
Of whom she took so great a care
In agony she heaved a sigh
For on the King she did relie
Bad hatered at length found a way

Darnley's Death

It was a little more then play
An awful day at last arived
Which was the last that he survived
For she went to a masquerade
But for that thing he dearly paid
For in her absence what was done
The thing would not I'm sure give fun
The house in which the King did lie
I cannot think without a sigh
Was blowen up at too next day
The King was killed I'm sorry to say
Some degree of suspicion fell
On the mighty Earl of Bothwell
And of the Queen they did think too
That of that thing she quite well knew
For they do think that Mary was
Of Darnlys death the very cause
But he was guiltless of the crime
But it was only for that time
Mary went to meet her son
That thing did not give her much fun
For Bothwell under some pretence
And with a great deal of expence
Marched to a town there found the Queen
He was quite glad when she was seen
He then disperced her slender train

That did not give her any pain
His castle of Dunbar she went
It was just there that she was sent
Poor Mary did not shew much terror
I must say this is an great error
This opportunity they catched
For there they did wish to be mached
To Edinburgh the Queen was brought
He was quite glad that she was caught
The castle then was in his power
His temper was quite bad & sower
There she was lodged in the castle
Which was as bad near as the bastile
He was then married to the Queen
Of whom he did not care a pin
The nobles formed a conspiracy
On poor Bothwell & poor Mary
Kirkaldy of grange and some more
His name I did not tell before
The nobles soldiars were quite brave
And they there masters lives would save
Poor Bothwells friends were not the same
And spread but a small degree of faim
For their poor master they forsook
But in their base flight he pertook
For he said to the Queen adieu

Con-
spiracy

Unhappy Queen

Those that behave so are but few
The King said to the Queen farewell
For his poor soldiars nearly fell
After Bothwell went away
In a humour not like play
She gave herselfe up with much ease
And she did try them all to please
The soldiars behaved very bad
It would indeed have put me mad
For when she turned her eyes so bright
She always saw a dreadful sight
Darnlys picture with her poor son
That did not give her any fun
Judge and revenge my cause cried he
This Mary could not bear to see
Covered with dust droping a tear
A spectical did she appear
To break her marrage she would not
Though it would happy make her lot
This her bad nobles would not bear
Though she was then so very fair
To Lochleven was she then carried
She would not say she was not married
At last from prison she got away
She got from prison I do say
All her great arts she had employed

Escape from Lochleven

And the success she had enjoyed
Her keepers brother gained she had
He was a very fine young lad
At last she hinted that she would
Make him her husband if she could
On Sunday night the second of May
She did escape that very day
At supper when his brother sat
I have not got a rhyme for that
And all the family had retired
His cleverness I much admired
One of this friends stole of the keys
To let her out when she did please
Let out poor Mary & her maid
Indeed she got from him much aid
But for that thing his brother paid
She got to the boat which was prepaired
Nobody but george for her cared
There she did meet her friends on shore
Who had been there some time before
At Setons house she sat some time
There she got good bread & good wine
She then got up and rode away
Full of great mirth & full of play
To Hamilon she came at last
For she did galop very fast

Imprisoned by Queen Elizabeth

Then she her followers all prepaired
And fealty to their Queen they sweared
They marched against the regent who
Could perhaps fight as well as you
Mary meanwhile was on a hill
Where she did stand up quite stock still
The regent Murry ganed them all
And every one of hers did fall
She then did mount again to ride
For on her friends she could n't confide
She flew to England for protection
For Elisabeth was her connection
Elisbeth was quite cross and sour
She wished poor Mary in her power
Elisbeth said she would her keep
And in her kingdom she might sleep
But to a prison she was sent
Elisbeths hart did not relent
Full nineteen years & mayhap more
Her legs became quite stif & sore
At last she heard she was to die
And that her soul would mount the sky
She was quite overjoyed at this
She thought it was her greatest bliss
The hour of death at last drew nigh
When she did mount the scaffold high

The Fate of Two Queens

Upon the block she laid her head
She was as calm as if in bed
One of the men her head did hold
And then her head was of I'm told
There ends all Queen Elisbeths foes
And those who at her bend their bows
Elisbeth was a cross old maid
Now when her youth began to fade
Her temper was worce then before
And people did not her adore
But Mary was much loved by all
Both by the great & by the small
But hark her soul to heaven did rise
And I do think she gained a prise
For I do think she would not go
Into the awfull place below
There is a thing that I must tell
Elisbeth went to fire and hell
Him who will teach her to be cevel
It must be her great friend the divel

The "epic" of Queen Mary was Marjorie's *magnum opus*, and although it may seem absurd to say that it was the result of years of reflection, there is evidence in the copy books that for at least two years Marjorie's

Virtuous Neutrality

mind reverted again and again to the sad story of the royal beauty. The girl had studied the history along with Isa Keith, she had examined portraits of Mary Stuart, and in the earlier journals she recorded her impressions of the subject much as she does in this poem. The title of "poem" is not too dignified to apply to Marjorie's production for it shows considerable power of design, and sustains the interest of the reader throughout its two hundred lines. "Poor Mary," the first words of the poem, indicate the writer's attitude throughout. The Queen's beauty and the Queen's troubles are kept ever prominent, but the Queen's frailty is not condoned. "I must say that was a great error," observed the impartial historian when recording a *faux pas*, but the disloyalty of the populace, who dared to flout their beautiful Queen, is equally reprobated. Only once is the critic tempted to abandon her virtuous neutrality—when recording the gallant action of George Douglas in contriving Mary's escape from Lochleven. Marjorie's romantic feelings would not permit her to blame the act. When dealing with good Queen Bess, our Madgie is

The Juvenile Judge

the personification of fiery indignation. To use a word of her own, she becomes "birsie." The English Queen is "a cross old maid," who allowed the fair Mary Stuart to linger in the dungeon until "her legs became quite stif & sore," and then killed her. Great is the contrast between the fates awarded to the rival Queens by their juvenile judge. It was as if Queen Mary, in spite of her infirmities, represented all that was fair and lovable in Marjorie herself, and so gained the affection of her friends and the favour of Heaven, while Elizabeth, whose "temper was worce then before," took her colour from the nature that Marjorie had fought against and conquered, and so fell under the doom of all that was awful in Scottish theology and demonology.

As a change from historical studies Marjorie chose for her next poem the monkey already mentioned. The poem runs thus:

"SONNET."

"O lovely O most charming pug
Thy gracefull air and heavenly mug
The beauties of his mind do shine

A Charming Monkey

And every bit is shaped so fine
Your very tail is most devine
Your teeth is whiter than the snow
You are a great buck & a bow
Your eyes are of so fine a shape
More like a Christains than an ape
His cheeks is like the roses blume
Your hair is like the ravens plume
His noses cast is of the roman
He is a very pretty weoman
I could not get a ryhme for roman
And was obliged to call it weoman"

The concluding couplet is characteristic of Marjorie's audacious humour.

Resuming her more serious vein, Pet Marjorie wrote a rhymed chronicle of the reigns of the Jameses, Kings of Scotland, the history of each reign being followed by an appropriate moral.

"THE LIFE OF THE KING JAMESES.

"At Perth poor James the first did die
That was n't a joy & luxury
And the poor King was murdered there

King James the Second

The nobles to do this did dare
For he to check their power had tried
The effort made, did hurt their pride

" The second James was not so good
To break his promise I know he would
He once did say into an earl
He would not bring him into perl
He bid him come to Stirling Castle
In this James behaved like a rascle
Upon the Kings word he relied
And to the castle he then hied
He wished him to give up the confederacy
I would have dont if I was he
The earl refused to do that thing
At this quite furious was the King
He puts his sword into his guts
And gave him many direfull cuts
His vassals all to arms ran
Their leader was a cowardly man
From the field he ran with terror
I must say this was an (great) error
He was killed by a cannon splinter
In the middle of the winter
Perhaps it was not at that time
But I could get no other ryhme

Three Kings

"James the third was very mean
And with mean persons was seen
He loved others more then his nobels
That was the cause of all his troubles
Very much he then insulted
And he seldom them consulted
For a long time this he had done
At last they got his youthfull son
And in battle he did engage
Though he was fifteen years of age
They marched against the very King
For having been both bad and mean
James the thirds life ends this way
Of his faults take care I say

"James the fourth was a charming prince
We have not got a better since
In flodden fiield alas fell he
The Lords were vexed this to see
Thus fell a good King & a brave
He fell untimely to his grave

"James the fifth loved favourites too
Which was a thing he should not do
At Pinkey were his armies killed
And with triumph they were not filled

The Unhappy Lot of Monarchs

He died of grief & of dispair
His nobles for this did not care
Thus fell five kings most crually
When I hear of them I'm ready to sigh
A King I should not like to be
I'd be frightened for a conspiracy"

This second study in Scottish history is less ambitious than the first, but here also we catch echoes of former meditations. The lines are in a lighter vein than those on Queen Mary; they contain more evident nonsense and samples of Marjorie's favourite jokes, such as the confession that the want of "ryhme" led her to say things that she did not seriously intend. The object of the poem is to illustrate by "sad stories of the deaths of kings" the unhappiness of a monarch's lot. "Thus fell five kings most crually," and therefore "a King I should not like to be."

The last page of this fourth journal is another reminder of a fact which one is very likely to forget, that after all Marjorie was only a little girl learning to write. It consists of copybook lines:

Maidie's Progress

Amend Bone Amend Bone

Amend Bone Amend Bone

repeated over and over.

Marjorie's journals cover nearly three years of her life, from the winter of 1808–9, to midsummer 1811. She began them when just six years old, and the first was finished in the following June. July saw the second commenced, and it was quite filled up when she had but newly completed her seventh year. In April, 1810, she began the third, and did not write the final page until autumn. The more exacting task of composing and writing out the poems on Queen Mary, the Jameses, and humbler subjects, occupied the winter of 1810–11, and the last copybook lesson in this last journal is dated July, 1811. During these two years and a half Maidie made good progress in writing, in spelling, in command of words, and in control of thoughts. But her winsome individuality was as marked at the end as at the beginning of the period. All her writings reveal the same fond, impulsive, affectionate creature; frank and artless

At Home Once More

in her innocence, yet unconsciously showing signs of a generous richness of nature, avid of the glad life of earth, but ever with a suggestion of something dainty and ethereal, lustrous and fair as the dew of the morning.

The last page of the last journal was signed and dated "Marjory Fleming, Kirkaldy, July 19," for she had returned to her childhood's home in that month. The "poor mother in Kirkcaldy" had been longing for her little daughter, and it was arranged that Maidie should go back to her. Exactly three years after she had first crossed the Firth of Forth, Marjorie was again taken on board the Fife packet, and was soon leaving the shores of the Lothians behind. Joy at the thought of reunion with father and mother and sister and brother was sadly tempered with grief at parting with Isa Keith, and all her friends at Edinburgh and Ravelston and Braehead. Arrived at her Kirkcaldy home, Marjorie skipped down from the stage-coach, ran eagerly through the old archway, glanced at the changes in the garden, and tripped upstairs to the old familiar rooms. It was a joy to

Homesick for Isa

find her father and mother again and her darling brother and sister, and to be able to greet the dear little baby, whom she was to be allowed to kiss and to pet. It was a joy to join her sister in her games and her lessons, and to tell her stories of life beyond the Forth. But Marjorie soon got quite homesick for Isa Keith. When she played on the long yellow beach that curves round the lovely bay, Marjorie's eyes often turned to the opposite shore. From her bedroom window she could see across the blue water, far beyond the brown island of Inchkeith, the familiar contour of the purple hills of Edinburgh, Arthur's Seat, and the Castle and Calton Hill, and she wondered what her Isa was doing. When she strolled through the shaded avenues of Raith her thoughts were ever of Isa. As was now becoming her habit when much moved, Madgie sat down and put her longings in verse:

"I am now in my native land
And see my dear friends all at hand
There is a thing that I do want,
With you these beauteous walks to haunt,

One Great Desire

We would be happy if you would
Try to come over if you could.
Then I would quite happy be
Now & for all eternity
Isa is so very kind
A better girl I could not find
My mother is so very sweet
And checks my appetite to eat
My father shews us what to do
But I am sure that I want you
I would be happy you to see
For I am sure that I love thee
You are the darling of my heart
With you I cannot bear to part
The watter falls we go to see
I am as happy as can be
In pastures sweet we go & stray
I could walk there quite well all day
At night my head on turf could lay
There quite well could I sleep all night
The moon would give its tranciant light
I have no more of poetry
O Isa do remember me
And try to love your

"Marjory

"Kirkaldy 26th July 1811"

A Void

The royal size of Marjorie's nature nowhere shows itself more nobly than in her treatment of her sister Isabella. Seeing that Marjorie was the younger of the two, one might expect to find her looking up to the older girl with respect, and expecting from her help and protection. But their relations are the reverse of this. As in their earlier childhood Marjorie protected Isabella, so now she writes of her—"A better girl I could not find."

But while her sister is pleasant, and her mother is sweet, and her father is wise, there is a void that only her cousin can fill. The beauty of Raith, the romantic seclusion of its pine-clad glen, and the glint of its waterfalls, are all suffused with the thought of Isa. She can enjoy it all, but only if Isa consents to come and share it with her. And so she ends with a cry for remembrance and love. Isa Keith promised to visit her friends in Kirkcaldy and share in Marjorie's walks, but as weeks passed the little girl became impatient. Addressing Isa Keith as one who had been a mother to her, she wrote:

Epidemic of Measles

"My Dear Little Mama,

"I was truly happy to hear that you are all well. My mother bid me tell you that you are delaying your visit to long for you will not get out which will be a hard restraint to you. We are surrounded with measles at present on every side for the Herons got it and Isabella Heron was near deaths door and one night her father lifted her out of bed And she fell down as they thought lifeless Mr Heron said that lassie is dead now she said I'm no dead yet she then threw up a big worm nine inches and a half long. My mother regrets she cannot write to you at present as her eyes are very sore. I have begun dancing but am not very fond of it for the boys strikes and mocks me. I have been another night at the dancing & like it better I will write to you as often as I can but I am afraid I shall not be able to write you every week. I long for you to fold you in my arms I respect you with respect due to a mother You dont know how I love you so I shall remain your loving child

"M Fleming

"Kirkaldy Septr 1st 1811"

Daily Programme

Nearly a fortnight later she wrote:

"My Dear Mother,

"You will think that I entirely forget you but I assure you that you are greatly mistaken. I think of you allways and often sigh to think of the distance between us two loving creatures of nature We have regular hours for all our occupations first at 7 o'clock we go to the dancing and come home at 8 we then read our bible and get our repeating then we play till 10 then we get our musick till 11 when we get our writing an accounts we sew from 12 till 1 & play till dinner after which I get my gramer and then work till five at 7 we come & knit till 8 when we dont go to the dancing this is an exact description of our employments You have disappointed us all very much especially me in not coming over every coach I heard I ran to the window but I was always disapointed I must take a hasty farewell to her whom I love reverence & doat on and whom I hope thinks the same of "Marjory Fleming.

"P.S.—An old pack of cards would be very exceptible

"Kircaldy 12 Octr 1811"

Expressions of Love

There is displayed in these letters—along with interesting descriptions of Madgie's new mode of life—a wealth of love, an ardour of longing, more precious than the treasures of Ind. With pitiful repetition Maidie multiplies expressions of love—longing, loving, doting. Every time she heard the stage-coach swinging along the narrow street of Kirkcaldy Marjorie ran to the window, hoping it might bring her idolised cousin. One of Isa's replies has been preserved. It is in playful terms addressed to:

"Miss Muff Maidie Marjory Fleming,
favoured by Rare Rear Admiral Fleming"

And Isa wrote:

"I long much to see you and talk over all our old stories to gether, and to hear you read and repeat. I am pining for my old friend Cesario, and poor dear and wicked Richard. How is the dear Multiplication Table going on? Are you still as much attached to 9 times 9 as you used to be?"

There has also been preserved a fragment of a letter from Marjorie stating that her

A Lament

mother "is quite surprised that she has not heard from any of you on which I will compose the following poem:

"O Isa why do not you write
I'm out of mind when out of sight
I am afraid your dead and gone
And thus I do begin my moan
O miresable unhappy child
To lose a mistress meek and mild
With all the graces which adorn
I wish that I was never born
I cannot bear the thought & Oh
Indeed I wish it was not so
Thine eyes with luster will not show
And in the grave where it is drere
Thou shalt be laid a lady fair
It fills my hart with great dispair
Indeed I now must say adieu
Both to Isabel and you"

The Isabel here referred to was no doubt Isabella Craufurd of Braehead, where Isa Keith was probably staying at the time. The following scrap was also sent to Braehead, for it contains a message to the Misses

Struck Down

Craufurd. Madgie's brother was about to visit his cousin, and Madgie would not miss the chance to write a note. Our old friend *Helvellyn* reappears here in a new disguise, and Madgie's genius for words awry shines in "Momento Mori"—sad omen.

"My Dear Isa,—

"I wish I was William that I might see you. I have a musick book for the violoncello and harpsichord and a sermon book which I would have sent to you if my mother said to ask you first if you would take it.

"Tell the Miss Crawfurds that I always remember them Tell the eldest that I keep the box as a Momento Mori adieu Dear Isa

"P.S.—Write the first and last verse of hillvalen again adieu"

The epidemic of measles referred to in one of Marjorie's letters soon claimed herself a victim. She became ill in November, ill for the first time in her life, and during the early days of December she suffered much.

Her sister recorded:

The Land o' the Leal

"My mother was struck by the patient quietness manifested by Marjorie during this illness, unlike her ardent, impulsive nature; but love and poetic feeling were unquenched.

"When Dr Johnstone rewarded her submissiveness with a sixpence, the request speedily followed that she might get out ere New Year's day came. When asked why she was so desirous of getting out, she immediately rejoined, 'Oh, I am so anxious to buy something with my sixpence for my dear Isa Keith.'

"Again, when lying very still, her mother asked her if there was anything she wished. 'Oh, yes. If you would just leave the room door open a wee bit, and play the *Land o' the Leal*, and I will lie and think and enjoy myself.' This is just as stated to me by her mother and mine."

So the weakened child lay still, and thought and enjoyed herself. Through the open door came the plaintive music of Lady Nairne's song, and Marjorie's never-failing memory filled in the words:

A Sabbath Scene

I'm wearin' awa', John,
Like snaw wreaths in thaw, John,
I'm wearin' awa' to
The Land o' the Leal.

The last scene in which our Maidie consciously took part was the most affecting of all. On Sunday, 15th December, she was apparently so far recovered that she was allowed to be up for a little while. The following narrative by Marjorie's sister describes in simple and sympathetic words the Sabbath scene in the stricken home:

"The happy day came, alike to parents and child, when Marjorie was allowed to come forth from the nursery to the parlour. It was Sabbath evening, and after tea my father, who idolised the child, and never afterwards in my hearing mentioned her name, took her in his arms; and while walking up and down the room, she said, 'Father, I will repeat something to you; what would you like?' He said, 'Just choose yourself, Maidie.' She hesitated for a moment between the paraphrase, 'Few are thy days and full of woe,' and the lines of Burns, 'Why am I loth to

The Last Recitation

leave this earthly scene?' but decided on the latter, a remarkable choice for a child."

A remarkable choice indeed! Let us picture the scene. The ardent mind, triumphing over the weakness of the body, enables our Maidie to speak in her old impressive way the moving sentences:

Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene?
Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?
Some drops of joy, with draughts of ill between,
Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms.
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms?
Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for guilt my terrors are in arms,
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath His sin-avenging rod.

Fain would I say, forgive my foul offence,
Fain promise never more to disobey;
But should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might forsake fair virtue's way,
Again in folly's paths might go astray,
Again exalt the brute, and sink the man.
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan,
Who sin so oft have mourned, yet to temptation ran?

Was there ever a sadder sight than that dear child distressing her sweet soul in such awful words as these?

Marjorie's Last Words

The sister's narrative continues:

"The repeating these lines seemed to stir up the depths of feeling in her soul. She asked to be allowed to write a poem; there was a doubt whether it would be right to allow her on account of hurting her eyes. She pleaded earnestly, 'Just this once.' The point was yielded, her slate was given her, and with great rapidity she wrote an address of fourteen lines":—

"TO HER LOVED COUSIN ON THE AUTHOR'S RECOVERY.

"Oh! Isa pain did visit me
I was at the last extremity
How often did I think of you
I wished your graceful form to view
To clasp you in my weak embrace
Indeed I thought I'd run my race
Good care I'm sure was of me taken
But still indeed I was much shaken
At last I daily strength did gain
And oh! at last away went pain
At length the doctor thought I might
Stay in the parlor all the night

Silence

I now continue so to do
Farewell to Nancy and to you
Wrote by M. F."

Those lines to the beloved Isa, whom the gifted child loved so passionately, may be taken as her last words.

When Marjorie had written her poem, she lay down in bed and was silent. She appeared to sleep, but at midnight she gave a cry of pain, "My head, my head." For three days she lay conscious of nothing but the pain in her head, and then in the early hours of Thursday morning the end came with the faint whisper, "Mother, mother." To whom did she apply the words? To her real or her adopted mother? We cannot tell.

Here are Mrs. Fleming's own words to Miss Keith:

"To tell you what your Maidie said of you would fill volumes; for you was the constant theme of her discourse, the subject of her thoughts, and ruler of her actions. The last time she mentioned you was a few hours before all sense save that of suffering was suspended, when she said to Dr. Johnstone

Sweetness and Serenity

'If you will let me out at the New Year I will be quite contented.' I asked what made her so anxious to get out then? 'I want to purchase a New Year's gift for Isa Keith with the sixpence you gave me for being patient in the measles, and I would like to choose it myself!' I do not remember her speaking afterwards, except to complain of her head, till just before she expired, when she articulated 'Oh, mother, mother!'"

The poor heart-broken mother, doting on the mortal remains of her child as she had treasured that child alive, also wrote:

"Never did I behold so beautiful an object. It resembled the finest wax-work. There was in the countenance an expression of sweetness and serenity which seemed to indicate that the pure spirit had anticipated the joys of heaven ere it quitted the mortal frame."

In the long, old-fashioned room that beautiful form lay for one short winter day, while many friends from far and near passed round it and bade a sorrowful farewell to those dear features. To the tender and often lonely

The Tiny Grave

heart of Marjorie it would have been a surprise had she known that she had drawn to herself the love of so many.

In the quaint old churchyard of Abbotshall, close beside the wooded policies of Raith, lies the sacred dust of that loving child. In the church registry, yellow with age, may be read the entry: "1811, December 21st,—James Fleming's daughter, buried in the middle grave of his property." Outside, by the side of a little winding footpath, stands a grey, weather-beaten tombstone, bearing the initials and date, "M. F. 1811"; and at the other end of the tiny grave stands a little white marble cross with the inscription:

PET MARJORIE
MARJORIE FLEMING.
BORN 1803. DIED 1811.

Down through the long dim years float these faint, sweet memories of Pet Marjorie, and our thoughts linger lovingly around even her family and friends because they were hers. Her father survived her death by about thirty years, but the dear thought of her never left him, and he could never bring

Left Behind

himself to speak her name. Maidie's mother lived ten years later still, and often told the story of Pet Marjorie to her youngest daughter, the baby of Marjorie's day. The other daughter, Isabella, was about eleven years old when Marjorie died, and when grown up she married Mr. Bremner, merchant, Kirkcaldy. Marjorie's brother, William, was thirteen years old when she died. He obtained a commission in the army of the East India Company, took part in one naval engagement, and while still a youth died in India. Shortly after the death of little Marjorie, her friend and cousin, Isa Keith, became acquainted with Mr. James Wilson, brother of Christopher North. They were married in 1824, taking up their residence at Woodville, near Edinburgh, where De Quincey was frequently their guest. Mr. Wilson travelled much, and was a well-equipped naturalist and a pleasing writer. They had two children, whose youth often reminded their mother of her lost Maidie. Mrs. Wilson died in 1837.

The house that was hallowed by the birth and death of Pet Marjorie is little changed, and around it clings an atmosphere of pen-

Pensive Memories

sive memories. Mrs. Findlay writes: "I sat lately in the sacred room which witnessed the closing scene of Marjorie's last Sabbath on earth. . . . In that corner behind the door once stood the piano on which her mother played *The Land o' the Leal* while Marjorie pondered in her little bed upstairs. . . . Somewhere on that space of floor had paced Marjorie's father with his spirit-like girl held fast in his strong arms; somewhere on that space of floor the ethereal child had knelt by a chair to write that last message from her loving heart. As I gazed in solemn reverie, Marjorie's death seemed so real, so recent, so personal a sorrow that it was impossible, in that room, to realise that the grass had been green and the snow white over her tiny grave for fully eighty-seven years."

The walks of Raith still wind by peaceful lake and pretty waterfall, and they wear a new glory since Marjorie revelled in their beauty. In the bosom of the distant city Charlotte Square still forms a green oasis, but at the corner the lofty house seems lone and silent; it resounds with no girlish laughter. At Ravelston the sun shines fair on the pond

A Perpetual Joy

and, "glimmering through the trees," flecks the lawn with the fairy tracery of their boughs, which Marjorie admired. Braehead, the beautiful and beloved, smiling among the "woulds" where Maidie mused "in lonely solitude," and cheerful with the company of animals, is all eloquent of her who called it "the delight of my soul." These childish writings also, in which we have the self-revelation of a human soul in the shaping, are charged with her piquant personality. Pet Marjorie even yet is a vivid reality, and will remain a perpetual joy.

MARJORIE FLEMING

BY

JOHN BROWN, M.D.

TO

MISS FLEMING,

TO WHOM I AM INDEBTED FOR ALL ITS MATERIALS,

This Memorial

OF HER DEAR AND UNFORGOTTEN

MAIDIE

IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.

MARJORIE FLEMING

Arm in Arm

ONE November afternoon in 1810—the year in which *Waverley* was resumed and laid aside again, to be finished off, its last two volumes in three weeks, and made immortal in 1814, and when its author, by the death of Lord Melville, narrowly escaped getting a civil appointment in India—three men, evidently lawyers, might have been seen escaping like schoolboys from the Parliament House, and speeding arm in arm down Bank Street and the Mound, in the teeth of a surly blast of sleet.

The three friends sought the *bield* of the low wall old Edinburgh boys remember well, and sometimes miss now, as they struggle with the stout west wind.

The three were curiously unlike each other. One, "a little man of feeble make, who would

Three Friends

be unhappy if his pony got beyond a foot pace," slight, with "small, elegant features, hectic cheek, and soft hazel eyes, the index of the quick, sensitive spirit within, as if he had the warm heart of a woman, her genuine enthusiasm, and some of her weaknesses." Another, as unlike a woman as a man can be; homely, almost common, in look and figure; his hat and his coat, and indeed his entire covering, worn to the quick, but all of the best material; what redeemed him from vulgarity and meanness were his eyes, deep set, heavily thatched, keen, hungry, shrewd, with a slumbering glow far in, as if they could be dangerous; a man to care nothing for at first glance, but somehow to give a second and not-forgetting look at. The third was the biggest of the three, and though lame, nimble, and all rough and alive with power; had you met him anywhere else, you would say he was a Liddesdale store-farmer, come of gentle blood; "a stout, blunt carle," as he says of himself, with the swing and stride and the eye of a man of the hills,—a large, sunny, out-of-door air all about him. On his broad and somewhat stooping shoulders was set

The Parting

that head which, with Shakespeare's and Bonaparte's, is the best known in all the world.

He was in high spirits, keeping his companions and himself in roars of laughter, and every now and then seizing them and stopping that they might take their fill of the fun. There they stood shaking with laughter, "not an inch of their body free" from its grip. At George Street they parted: one to Rose Court, behind St. Andrew's Church; one to Albany Street; the other, our big and limping friend, to Castle Street.

We need hardly give their names. The first was William Erskine, afterwards Lord Kinnedder, chased out of the world by a calumny, killed by its foul breath,—

> And at the touch of wrong, without a strife,
> Slipped in a moment out of life.

There is nothing in literature more beautiful or more pathetic than Scott's love and sorrow for this friend of his youth.

The second was William Clerk, the "Darsie Latimer" of *Redgauntlet*, "a man," as Scott says, "of the most acute intellects and

Before and After

powerful apprehension," but of more powerful indolence, so as to leave the world with little more than the report of what he might have been,—a humourist as genuine, though not quite so savagely Swiftian as his brother, Lord Eldin, neither of whom had much of that commonest and best of all the humours, called good.

The third we all know. What has he not done for every one of us? Who else ever, except Shakespeare, so diverted mankind, entertained and entertains a world so liberally, so wholesomely? We are fain to say not even Shakespeare, for his is something deeper than diversion, something higher than pleasure, and yet who would care to split this hair?

Had any one watched him closely before and after the parting, what a change he would see! The bright, broad laugh, the shrewd, jovial word, the man of the Parliament House and of the world; and next step, moody, the light of his eye withdrawn, as if seeing things that were invisible; his shut mouth, like a child's, so impressionable, so innocent, so sad; he was now all within, as before he was all without; hence his brooding

Sir Walter's Den

look. As the snow blattered in his face, he muttered: "How it raves and drifts! On-ding o' snaw,—ay, that's the word,—on-ding ——" He was now at his own door, "Castle Street, No. 39." He opened the door and went straight to his den, that wondrous work-shop, where, in one year, 1823, when he was fifty-two, he wrote *Peveril of the Peak*, *Quentin Durward*, and *St. Ronan's Well*, besides much else. We once took the foremost of our novelists, the greatest, we would say, since Scott, into this room, and could not but mark the solemnising effect of sitting where the great magician sat so often and so long, and looking out upon that little shabby bit of sky and that back-green, where faithful Camp lies.[1]

He sat down in his large green morocco elbow-chair, drew himself close to his table,

[1] This favourite dog "died about January, 1809, and was buried in a fine moonlight night in the little garden behind the house in Castle Street. My wife tells me she remembers the whole family in tears about the grave, as her father himself smoothed the turf above Camp, with the saddest face she had ever seen. He had been engaged to dine abroad that day, but apologised, on account of the death of 'a dear old friend.'"—Lockhart's *Life of Scott*.

"Awa' to Marjorie"

and glowered and gloomed at his writing apparatus, "a very handsome old box, richly carved, lined with crimson velvet, and containing ink-bottles, taper-stand, etc., in silver, the whole in such order that it might have come from the silversmith's window half an hour before." He took out his paper, then starting up angrily, said: "'Go spin, you jade, go spin.' No, d—— it, it won't do,—

'My spinnin' wheel is auld and stiff,
The rock o't wunna stand, sir,
To keep the temper-pin in tiff
Employs ower aft my hand, sir.'

I am off the fang.[1] I can make nothing of *Waverley* to-day; I'll awa' to Marjorie. Come wi' me, Maida, you thief." The great creature rose slowly, and the pair were off, Scott taking a *maud* (a plaid) with him. "White as a frosted plum-cake, by jingo!" said he, when he got to the street. Maida gambolled and whisked among the snow, and his master strode across to Young Street, and through it to 1 North Charlotte Street, to the house of his dear friend, Mrs. William Keith

[1] Applied to a pump when it is dry, and its valve has lost its "fang"; from the German *fangen*, to hold.

Scott seeks his playfellow

of Corstorphine Hill, niece of Mrs. Keith of Ravelston, of whom he said at her death, eight years after: "Much tradition, and that of the best, has died with this excellent old lady, one of the few persons whose spirits and *cleanliness* and freshness of mind and body made old age lovely and desirable."

Sir Walter was in that house almost every day, and had a key, so in he and the hound went, shaking themselves in the lobby. "Marjorie! Marjorie!" shouted her friend, "where are ye, my bonnie wee croodlin doo?" In a moment a bright, eager child of seven was in his arms, and he was kissing her all over. Out came Mrs. Keith. "Come yer ways in, Wattie." "No, not now. I am going to take Marjorie wi' me, and you may come to your tea in Duncan Roy's sedan, and bring the bairn home in your lap." "Tak' Marjorie, and it *on-ding o' snaw!*" said Mrs. Keith. He said to himself, "On-ding, — that's odd, — that is the very word." "Hoot, awa! look here," and he displayed the corner of his plaid, made to hold lambs (the true shepherd's plaid, consisting of two breadths sewed together, and uncut at one end, making a poke

Chums

or *cul de sac*). "Tak' yer lamb," said she, laughing at the contrivance; and so the Pet was first well happit up, and then put, laughing silently, into the plaid neuk, and the shepherd strode off with his lamb,—Maida gambolling through the snow and running races in her mirth.

Did n't he face "the angry airt," and make her bield his bosom, and into his own room with her, and lock the door, and out with the warm, rosy little wifie, who took it all with great composure! There the two remained for three or four hours, making the house ring with their laughter; you can fancy the big man's and Maidie's laugh. Having made the fire cheery, he set her down in his ample chair, and, standing sheepishly before her, began to say his lesson, which happened to be: "Ziccotty, diccotty, dock, the mouse ran up the clock, the clock struck wan, down the mouse ran, ziccotty, diccotty, dock." This done repeatedly till she was pleased, she gave him his new lesson, gravely and slowly, timing it upon her small fingers,—he saying it after her:

Wonery, twoery, tickery, seven;
Alibi, crackaby, ten, and eleven;

Pin, pan, musky, dan;
Tweedle-um, twoddle-um,
Twenty-wan; eerie, orie, ourie,
You, are, out.

Wild with Excitement

He pretended to great difficulty, and she rebuked him with most comical gravity, treating him as a child. He used to say that when he came to Alibi Crackaby he broke down, and Pin-Pan, Musky-Dan, Tweedle-um, Twoddle-um, made him roar with laughter. He said *Musky-Dan* especially was beyond endurance, bringing up an Irishman and his hat fresh from the Spice Islands and odoriferous Ind; she getting quite bitter in her displeasure at his ill-behaviour and stupidness.

Then he would read ballads to her in his own glorious way, the two getting wild with excitement over *Gil Morrice* or the *Baron of Smailholm;* and he would take her on his knee and make her repeat Constance's speeches in *King John*, till he swayed to and fro, sobbing his fill. Fancy the gifted little creature, like one possessed, repeating,—

For I am sick, and capable of fears,
Oppressed with wrong, and therefore full of fears;

Marjorie's Power over Scott

A widow, husbandless, subject to fears;
A woman, naturally born to fears.

If thou that bidst me be content, wert grim,
Ugly and slanderous to thy mother's womb,
Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious—

Or, drawing herself up "to the height of her great argument,"—

I will instruct my sorrows to be proud,
For grief is proud, and makes his owner stout.
Here I and sorrow sit.

Scott used to say that he was amazed at her power over him, saying to Mrs. Keith: "She's the most extraordinary creature I ever met with, and her repeating of Shakespeare overpowers me as nothing else does."

Thanks to the unforgetting sister of this dear child, who has much of the sensibility and fun of her who has been in her small grave these fifty and more years, we have now before us the letters and journals of Pet Marjorie,—before us lies and gleams her rich brown hair, bright and sunny as if yesterday's, with the words on the paper, "Cut out in her last illness," and two pictures of her by her beloved Isabella, whom she worshipped; there are the faded old scraps of paper, hoarded

Fancy's Child

still, over which her warm breath and her warm little heart had poured themselves; there is the old water-mark, "Lingard, 1808." The two portraits are very like each other, but plainly done at different times; it is a chubby, healthy face, deep-set, brooding eyes, as eager to tell what is going on within as to gather in all the glories from without; quick with the wonder and the pride of life; they are eyes that would not be soon satisfied with seeing; eyes that would devour their object, and yet childlike and fearless; and that is a mouth that will not be soon satisfied with love; it has a curious likeness to Scott's own, which has always appeared to us his sweetest, most mobile, and speaking feature.

There she is, looking straight at us as she did at him,—fearless and full of love, passionate, wild, wilful, fancy's child. One cannot look at it without thinking of Wordsworth's lines on poor Hartley Coleridge:

O blessed vision, happy child!
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I thought of thee with many fears,
Of what might be thy lot in future years.
I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality;

Loving and Happy

And Grief, uneasy lover! ne'er at rest,
But when she sat within the touch of thee.
Oh, too industrious folly!
Oh, vain and causeless melancholy!
Nature will either end thee quite,
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee by individual right
A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flock.

And we can imagine Scott, when holding his warm, plump little playfellow in his arms, repeating that stately friend's lines:

Loving she is, and tractable, though wild,
And Innocence hath privilege in her,
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes,
And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock chastisement and partnership in play.
And, as a fagot sparkles on the hearth,
Not less if unattended and alone,
Than when both young and old sit gathered round,
And take delight in its activity,
Even so this happy creature of herself
Is all-sufficient; solitude to her
Is blithe society; she fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.

But we will let her disclose herself. We need hardly say that all this is true, and that these letters are as really Marjorie's as was this light brown hair; indeed, you could as easily fabricate the one as the other.

An Old Servant

There was an old servant, Jeanie Robertson, who was forty years in her grandfather's family. Marjorie Fleming, or, as she is called in the letters, and by Sir Walter, Maidie, was the last child she kept. Jeanie's wages never exceeded £3 a year, and, when she left service, she had saved £40. She was devotedly attached to Maidie, rather despising and ill-using her sister Isabella—a beautiful and gentle child. This partiality made Maidie apt at times to domineer over Isabella. "I mention this" (writes her surviving sister), "for the purpose of telling you an instance of Maidie's generous justice. When only five years old, when walking in Raith grounds, the two children had run on before, and old Jeanie remembered they might come too near a dangerous mill-lade. She called to them to turn back. Maidie heeded her not, rushed all the faster on, and fell, and would have been lost, had her sister not pulled her back, saving her life, but tearing her clothes. Jeanie flew on Isabella to 'give it her' for spoiling her favorite's dress; Maidie rushed in between, crying out: 'Pay [whip] Maidjie as much as you like, and I'll not say one word;

The Infant Prodigy

but touch Isy, and I'll roar like a bull!' Years after Maidie was resting in her grave, my mother used to take me to the place, and told the story always in the exact same words." This Jeanie must have been a character. She took great pride in exhibiting Maidie's brother William's Calvinistic acquirements, when nineteen months old, to the officers of a militia regiment then quartered in Kirkcaldy. This performance was so amusing that it was often repeated, and the little theologian was presented by them with a cap and feathers. Jeanie's glory was "putting him through the carritch" (catechism) in broad Scotch, beginning at the beginning with, "Wha made ye, ma bonnie man?" For the correctness of this and the three next replies Jeanie had no anxiety, but the tone changed to menace, and the closed *nieve* (fist) was shaken in the child's face as she demanded, "Of what are you made?" "DIRT!" was the answer uniformly given. "Wull ye never learn to say *dust*, ye thrawn deevil?" with a cuff from the opened hand, was the as inevitable rejoinder.

Here is Maidie's first letter before she was

Maidie's First Letter

six. The spelling unaltered, and there are no "commoes":

"My dear Isa,—I now sit down to answer all your kind and beloved letters which you were so good as to write to me. This is the first time I ever wrote a letter in my Life. There are a great many Girls in the Square and they cry just like a pig when we are under the painfull necessity of putting it to Death. Miss Potune a Lady of my acquaintance praises me dreadfully. I repeated something out of Dean Swift, and she said I was fit for the stage, and you may think I was primmed up with majestick Pride, but upon my word felt myselfe turn a little birsay—birsay is a word which is a word that William composed which is as you may suppose a little enraged. This horrid fat simpliton says that my Aunt is beautifull which is intirely impossible for that is not her nature."

What a peppery little pen we wield! What could that have been outof the sardonic Dean? what other child of that age would have used "beloved" as she does? This power of affection, this faculty of *be*loving, and wild hunger

Enchanting Experience

to be beloved, comes out more and more. She perilled her all upon it, and it may have been as well—we know, indeed, that it was far better—for her that this wealth of love was so soon withdrawn to its one only infinite Giver and Receiver. This must have been the law of her earthly life. Love was indeed "her Lord and King"; and it was perhaps well for her that she found so soon that her and our only Lord and King himself is Love.

Here are bits from her Diary at Braehead: "The day of my existence here has been delightful and enchanting. On Saturday I expected no less than three well-made bucks, the names of whom is here advertised. Mr. Geo. Crakey [Craigie], and Wm. Keith and Jn. Keith—the first is the funniest of every one of them. Mr. Crakey and I walked to Craky-hall [Craigiehall] hand and hand in Innocence and matitation [meditation] sweet thinking on the kind love which flows in our tender hearted mind which is overflowing with majestic pleasure no one was ever so polite to me in the hole state of my existence. Mr. Craky you must know is a great Buck and pretty good-looking.

"I am at Ravelston enjoying nature's fresh air. The birds are singing sweetly—the calf doth frisk and nature shows her glorious face—the sun shines through the trees, it is delightful."

(*From a pencil sketch by Warwick Brookes.*)

A Confession

"I am at Ravelston enjoying nature's fresh air. The birds are singing sweetly—the calf doth frisk and nature shows her glorious face."

Here is a confession: "I confess I have been very more like a little young divil than a creature for when Isabella went upstairs to teach me religion and my multiplication and to be good and all my other lessons I stamped with my foot and threw my new hat which she had made on the ground and was sulky and was dreadfully passionate, but she never whiped me but said Marjory go into another room and think what a great crime you are committing letting your temper git the better of you. But I went so sulkily that the devil got the better of me but she never never never whips me so that I think I would be the better of it and the next time that I behave ill I think she should do it for she never does it. . . . Isabella has given me praise for checking my temper for I was sulky even when she was kneeling an whole hour teaching me to write."

Our poor little wifie, *she* has no doubts of the personality of the Devil! "Yesterday I

Ill Behaviour

behave extremely ill in God's most holy church for I would never attend myself nor let Isabella attend which was a great crime for she often, often tells me that when to or three are geathered together God is in the midst of them, and it was the very same Divil that tempted Job that tempted me I am sure; but he resisted Satan though he had boils and many many other misfortunes which I have escaped. . . . I am now going to tell you the horible and wretched plaege [plague] that my multiplication gives me you can't conceive it the most Devilish thing is 8 times 8 and 7 times 7 it is what nature itself cant endure."

This is delicious; and what harm is there in her "Devilish"? it is strong language merely; even old Rowland Hill used to say "he grudged the Devil those rough and ready words." "I walked to that delightful place Crakyhall with a delightful young man beloved by all his friends especially by me his loveress, but I must not talk any more about him for Isa said it is not proper for to speak of gentalmen but I will never forget him! . . . I am very very glad that satan has

In Bad Humour

not given me boils and many other misfortunes—In the holy bible these words are written that the Devil goes like a roaring lyon in search of his pray but the lord lets us escape from him but we" (*pauvre petite!*) "do not strive with this awfull Spirit. . . . To-day I pronounced a word which should never come out of a lady's lips it was that I called John a Impudent Bitch. I will tell you what I think made me in so bad a humor is I got one or two of that bad bad sina [senna] tea to-day," —a better excuse for bad humour and bad language than most.

She has been reading the book of Esther: "It was a dreadful thing that Haman was hanged on the very gallows which he had prepared for Mordeca to hang him and his ten sons thereon and it was very wrong and cruel to hang his sons for they did not commit the crime; *but then Jesus was not then come to teach us to be merciful.*" This is wise and beautiful,—has upon it the very dew of youth and of holiness. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He perfects His praise.

"This is Saturday and I am very glad of it, because I have play half the Day and I get

Meditations

money too but alas I owe Isabella 4 pence for I am finned 2 pence whenever I bite my nails. Isabella is teaching me to make simme colings nots of interrigations peorids commoes, etc. . . . As this is Sunday I will meditate upon Senciable and Religious subjects. First I should be very thankful I am not a begger."

This amount of meditation and thankfulness seems to have been all she was able for.

"I am going to-morrow to a delightfull place, Braehead by name, belonging to Mrs. Crraford, where there is ducks cocks hens bubblyjocks 2 dogs 2 cats and swine which is delightful. I think it is shocking to think that the dog and cat should bear them" (this is a meditation physiological), "and they are drowned after all. I would rather have a man-dog than a woman-dog, because they do not bear like women-dogs; it is a hard case —it is shocking. I cam here to enjoy natures delightful breath it is sweeter than a fial [phial] of rose oil."

Braehead is the farm the historical Jock Howison asked and got from our gay James the Fifth, "the gudeman o' Ballengiech," as a

"Braehead—where there is ducks cocks hens bubbly-jocks 2 dogs 2 cats and swine which is delightful."

(From a pencil sketch by Warwick Brookes.)

A Lovely Nook

reward for the services of his flail when the king had the worst of it at Cramond Brig with the gypsies. The farm is unchanged in size from that time, and still in the unbroken line of the ready and victorious thresher. Braehead is held on the condition of the possessor being ready to present the king with a ewer and basin to wash his hands, Jock having done this for his unknown king after the *splore*, and when George the Fourth came to Edinburgh this ceremony was performed in silver at Holyrood. It is a lovely neuk, this Braehead, preserved almost as it was two hundred years ago. "Lot and his wife," mentioned by Maidie,—two quaintly cropped yew-trees,—still thrive; the burn runs as it did in her time, and sings the same quiet time—as much the same and as different as *Now* and *Then*. The house full of old family relics and pictures, the sun shining on them through the small deep windows with their plate-glass; and there, blinking at the sun, and chattering contentedly, is a parrot, that might, for its looks of eld, have been in the ark, and domineered over and *deaved* the dove. Everything about the place is old and fresh.

Marjorie's Religion

This is beautiful: "I am very sorry to say that I forgot God—that is to say I forgot to pray to-day and Isabella told me that I should be thankful that God did not forget me—if he did, O what become of me if I was in danger and God not friends with me—I must go to unquenchable fire and if I was tempted to sin—how could I resist it O no I will never do it again—no no —if I can help it." (Canny wee wifie!) "My religion is greatly falling off because I dont pray with so much attention when I am saying my prayers, and my charecter is lost among the Braehead people. I hope I will be religious again—but as for regaining my charecter I despare for it." (Poor little "habit and repute"!)

Her temper, her passion, and her "badness" are almost daily confessed and deplored: "I will never again trust to my own power, for I see that I cannot be good without God's assistance—I will not trust in my own selfe, and Isa's health will be quite ruined by me—it will indeed." "Isa has giving me advice, which is, that when I feal Satan beginning to tempt me, that I flea him

The World and the Devil

and he would flea me." "Remorse is the worst thing to bear, and I am afraid that I will fall a marter to it."

Poor dear little sinner!—Here comes the world again: "In my travels I met with a handsome lad named Charles Balfour, Esq., and from him I got ofers of marage—offers of marage, did I say? Nay plenty heard me." A fine scent for "breach of promise"!

This is abrupt and strong: "The Divil is curced and all works. 'T is a fine work Newton on the profecies. I wonder if there is another book of poems comes near the Bible. The Divil always girns at the sight of the Bible." "Miss Potune" (her "simpliton" friend) "is very fat; she pretends to be very learned. She say she saw a stone that dropt from the skies; but she is a good Christian." Here comes her views on church government: "An Annibabtist is a thing I am not a member of—I am a Pisplekan [Episcopalian] just now, and" (O you little Laodicean and Latitudinarian!) "a Prisbeteran at Kirkcaldy"!—[*Blandula! Vagula! cœlum et animum mutas quæ trans mare* (i. e., *trans Bodotriam*)*-curris!*]—"my native town." "Sentiment is not

Sentiment

what I am acquainted with as yet, though I wish it, and should like to practise it" (!) "I wish I had a great, great deal of gratitude in my heart, in all my body." "There is a new novel published, named Self-Control" (Mrs. Brunton's) "a very good maxim forsooth!" This is shocking: "Yesterday a marrade man, named Mr. John Balfour, Esq., offered to kiss me, and offered to marry me, though the man" (a fine directness this!) "was espused, and his wife was present and said he must ask her permission; but he did not. I think he was ashamed and confounded before 3 gentelman—Mr. Jobson and 2 Mr. Kings." "Mr. Banester's" (Bannister's) "Budjet is to-night; I hope it will be a good one. A great many authors have expressed themselves too sentimentally." You are right, Marjorie. "A Mr. Burns writes a beautiful song on Mr. Cunhaming, whose wife desarted him—truly it is a most beautiful one." "I like to read the Fabulous historys, about the histerys of Robin, Dickey, flapsay, and Peccay, and it is very amusing, for some were good birds and some were bad, but Peccay was the most dutiful and obedient to her parients." "Thomson

The Forbidden Subject

is a beautiful author, and Pope, but nothing to Shakespear, of which I have a little knoledge. Macbeth is a pretty composition, but awful one." "The Newgate Calender is very instructive" (!) "A sailor called here to say farewell; it must be dreadful to leave his native country when he might get a wife; or perhaps me, for I love him very much. But O I forgot, Isabella forbid me to speak about love." This antiphlogistic regimen and lesson is ill to learn by our Maidie, for here she sins again: "Love is a very papithatick thing" (it is almost a pity to correct this into pathetic), "as well as troublesome and tiresome—but O Isabella forbid me to speak of it." Here are her reflections on a pineapple: "I think the price of a pine-apple is very dear: it is a whole bright goulden guinea, that might have sustained a poor family." Here is a new vernal simile: "The hedges are sprouting like chicks from the eggs when they are newly hatched or, as the vulgar say, *clacked*." "Doctor Swift's works are very funny; I got some of them by heart." "Morehead's sermons are I hear much praised, but I never read sermons of any kind; but I read

Sweet Isabel

novelettes and my Bible, and I never forget it, or my prayers." Bravo, Marjorie!

She seems now, when still about six, to have broken out into song:

EPHIBOL [EPIGRAM OR EPITAPH—WHO KNOWS WHICH?] ON MY DEAR LOVE ISABELLA

Here lies sweet Isabell in bed
With a night-cap on her head;
Her skin is soft, her face is fair,
And she has very pretty hair;
She and I in bed lies nice,
And undisturbed by rats or mice;
She is disgusted with Mr. Worgan,
Though he plays upon the organ.
Her nails are neat, her teeth are white,
Her eyes are very, very bright;
In a conspicuous town she lives,
And to the poor her money gives:
Here ends sweet Isabella's story,
And may it be much to her glory.

Here are some bits at random:

Of summer I am very fond,
And love to bathe into a pond;
The look of sunshine dies away,
And will not let me out to play;
I love the morning's sun to spy
Glittering through the casement's eye,
The rays of light are very sweet,
And puts away the taste of meat;
The balmy breeze comes down from heaven,
And makes us like for to be living.

"Here lies sweet Isabell in bed,
With a night-cap on her head."

(*From a pencil sketch by Warwick Brookes.*)

Concerning Many Things

"The casawary is an curious bird, and so is the gigantic crane, and the pelican of the wilderness, whose mouth holds a bucket of fish and water. Fighting is what ladies is not qualyfied for, they would not make a good figure in battle or in a duel. Alas! we females are of little use to our country. The history of all the malcontents as ever was hanged is amusing." Still harping on the *Newgate Calendar!*

"Braehead is extremely pleasant to me by the companie of swine, geese, cocks, etc., and they are the delight of my soul."

"I am going to tell you of a melancholy story. A young turkie of 2 or 3 months old, would you believe it, the father broke its leg, and he killed another! I think he ought to be transported or hanged."

"Queen Street is a very gay one, and so is Princes Street, for all the lads and lasses, besides bucks and beggars parade there."

"I should like to see a play very much, for I never saw one in all my life, and don't believe I ever shall; but I hope I can be content without going to one. I can be quite happy without my desire being granted."

Weakness and Strength

"Some days ago Isabella had a terrible fit of the toothake, and she walked with a long night-shift at dead of night like a ghost, and I thought she was one. She prayed for nature's sweet restorer—balmy sleep—but did not get it—a ghostly figure indeed she was, enough to make a saint tremble. It made me quiver and shake from top to toe. Superstition is a very mean thing, and should be despised and shunned."

Here is her weakness and her strength again: "In the love-novels all the heroines are very desperate. Isabella will not allow me to speak about lovers and heroins, and 'tis too refined for my taste." "Miss Egward's [Edgeworth's] tails are very good, particularly some that are very much adapted for youth [!] as Laz Laurance and Tarelton, False Keys, etc., etc."

"Tom Jones and Grey's Elegey in a country churchyard are both excellent, and much spoke of by both sex, particularly by the men." Are our Marjories nowadays better or worse because they cannot read *Tom Jones* unharmed? More better than worse; but who among them can repeat Gray's *Lines on*

a Distant Prospect of Eton College as could our Maidie?

Here is some more of her prattle: "I went into Isabella's bed to make her smile like the Genius Demedicus" (the Venus de Medicis), "or the statute in an ancient Greece, but she fell fast asleep in my very face, at which my anger broke forth, so that I awoke her from a comfortable nap. All was now hushed up again, but again my anger burst forth at her bidding me get up."

She begins thus softly:

> Death the righteous love to see,
> But from it doth the wicked flee.

Then suddenly breaks off (as if with laughter):

"I am sure they fly as fast as their legs can carry them!"

> There is a thing I love to see,
> That is our monkey catch a flee.
>
> I love in Isa's bed to lie,
> Oh, such a joy and luxury!
> The bottom of the bed I sleep,
> And with great care within I creep;
> Oft I embrace her feet of lillys,
> But she has goton all the pillys.
> Her neck I never can embrace,
> But I do hug her feet in place.

Random Bits

How childish and yet how strong and free is her use of words! "I lay at the foot of the bed because Isabella said I disturbed her by continial fighting and kicking, but I was very dull, and continially at work reading the Arabian Nights, which I could not have done if I had slept at the top. I am reading the Mysteries of Udolpho. I am much interested in the fate of poor, poor Emily."

Here is one of her swains:

Very soft and white his cheeks,
His hair is red, and grey his breeks;
His tooth is like the daisy fair,
His only fault is in his hair.

This is a higher flight:

DEDICATED TO MRS. H. CRAWFORD BY THE AUTHOR, M. F.

Three turkeys fair their last have breathed,
And now this world forever leaved;
Their father, and their mother too,
They sigh and weep as well as you;
Indeed, the rats their bones have cranched.
Into eternity theire launched.
A direful death indeed they had,
As wad put any parent mad;
But she was more than usual calm,
She did not give a single dam.

"A direful death indeed they had."
(*From a pencil sketch by Warwick Brookes.*)

Marjorie's Epic

This last word is saved from all sin by its tender age, not to speak of the want of the *n*. We fear "she" is the abandoned mother, in spite of her previous sighs and tears.

"Isabella says when we pray we should pray fervently, and not rattel over a prayer—for that we are kneeling at the footstool of our Lord and Creator, who saves us from eternal damnation, and from unquestionable fire and brimston."

She has a long poem on Mary Queen of Scots:

> Queen Mary was much loved by all,
> Both by the great and by the small,
> But hark! her soul to heaven doth rise!
> And I suppose she has gained a prize—
> For I do think she would not go
> Into the *awful* place below;
> There is a thing that I must tell,
> Elizabeth went to fire and hell;
> He who would teach her to be civil,
> It must be her great friend the divil!

She hits off Darnley well:

> A noble's son, a handsome lad,
> By some queer way or other, had
> Got quite the better of her heart,
> With him she always talked apart:
> Silly he was, but very fair,
> A greater buck was not found there.

A Poet's Necessity

"By some queer way or other"; is not this the general case and the mystery, young ladies and gentlemen? Goethe's doctrine of "elective affinities" discovered by our Pet Maidie!

SONNET TO A MONKEY

O lively, O most charming pug,
Thy graceful air, and heavenly mug;
The beauties of his mind do shine,
And every bit is shaped and fine.
Your teeth are whiter than the snow,
Your a great buck, your a great beau;
Your eyes are of so nice a shape,
More like a Christian's than an ape;
Your cheek is like the rose's blume,
Your hair is like the raven's plume;
His nose's cast is of the Roman,
He is a very pretty woman.
I could not get a rhyme for Roman,
So was obliged to call him woman.

This last joke is good. She repeats it when writing of James the Second being killed at Roxburgh:

He was killed by a cannon splinter,
Quite in the middle of the winter;
Perhaps it was not at that time,
But I can get no other rhyme!

Here is one of her last letters, dated Kirkcaldy, 12th October, 1811. You can see how her nature is deepening and enriching:

Last Letters

"My Dear Mother,—You will think that I entirely forgot you, but I assure you that you are greatly mistaken. I think of you always and often sigh to think of the distance between us two loving creatures of nature. We have regular hours for all our occupations first at 7 o'clock we go to the dancing and come home at 8 we then read our Bible and get our repeating and then play till ten then we get our music till 11 when we get our writing and accounts we sew from 12 till 1 after which I get my gramer and then work till five. At 7 we come and knit till 8 when we dont go to the dancing. This is an exact description. I must take a hasty farewell to her whom I love, reverence and doat on and who I hope thinks the same of

"Marjory Fleming.

"P.S.—An old pack of cards [!] would be very exeptible."

This other is a month earlier:

"My dear little Mama,—I was truly happy to hear that you were all well. We are surrounded with measles at present on every side, for the Herons got it, and Isabella

A Heart's Devotion

Heron was near Death's Door, and one night her father lifted her out of bed, and she fell down as they thought lifeless. Mr. Heron said,—'That lassie 's deed noo'—'I 'm no deed yet.' She then threw up a big worm nine inches and a half long. I have begun dancing, but am not very fond of it, for the boys strikes and mocks me.—I have been another night at the dancing; I like it better. I will write to you as often as I can; but I am afraid not every week. *I long for you with the longings of a child to embrace you—to hold you in my arms. I respect you with all the respect due to a mother. You dont know how I love you. So I shall remain, your loving child*—M. Fleming."

What rich involution of love in the words marked! Here are some lines to her beloved Isabella, in July, 1811:

> There is a thing that I do want,
> With you these beauteous walks to haunt,
> We would be happy if you would
> Try to come over if you could.
> Then I would all quite happy be
> *Now and for all eternity.*
> My mother is so very sweet,
> *And checks my appetite to eat;*

"We have regular hours for all our occupations."
(From a pencil sketch by Warwick Brookes.)

The Shadow of Death

My father shows us what to do;
But O I'm sure that I want you.
I have no more of poetry;
O Isa do remember me,
And try to love your Marjory.

In a letter from "Isa" to

"Miss Muff Maidie Marjory Fleming
favored by Rare Rear-Admiral Fleming,"

she says: "I long much to see you, and talk over all our old stories together, and to hear you read and repeat. I am pining for my old friend Cesario, and poor Lear, and wicked Richard. How is the dear Multiplication table going on? are you still as much attached to 9 times 9 as you used to be?"

But this dainty, bright thing is about to flee—to come "quick to confusion." The measles she writes of seized her, and she died on the 19th of December, 1811. The day before her death, Sunday, she sat up in bed, worn and thin, her eye gleaming as with the light of a coming world, and with a tremulous, old voice repeated the following lines by Burns,—heavy with the shadow of death, and lit with the fantasy of the judgment-seat,—the publican's prayer in paraphrase:

Lines by Burns

Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene?
Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?
Some drops of joy, with draughts of ill between,
Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms.
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms?
Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for GUILT my terrors are in arms;
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod.

Fain would I say, "Forgive my foul offence!"
Fain promise never more to disobey;
But should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might forsake fair virtue's way,
Again in folly's path might go astray,
Again exalt the brute and sink the man.
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan,
Who sin so oft have mourned, yet to temptation ran?

O Thou great Governor of all below,
If I might dare a lifted eye to thee,
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
And still the tumult of the raging sea;
With that controlling power assist even me
Those headstrong furious passions to confine,
For all unfit I feel my powers to be
To rule their torrent in the allowèd line;
O aid me with Thy help, OMNIPOTENCE DIVINE.

It is more affecting than we care to say to read her mother's and Isabella Keith's letters written immediately after her death. Old and withered, tattered and pale, they are

Love's Theme

now; but when you read them, how quick, how throbbing with life and love! how rich in that language of affection which only women, and Shakespeare, and Luther can use,—that power of detaining the soul over the beloved object and its loss.

> *K. Philip to Constance:*
> You are as fond of grief as of your child.
> *Const.:*
> Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
> Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me;
> Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
> Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
> Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form.
> Then I have reason to be fond of grief.

What variations cannot love play on this one string!

In her first letter to Miss Keith, Mrs. Fleming says of her dead Maidie:

"Never did I behold so beautiful an object. It resembled the finest waxwork. There was in the countenance an expression of sweetness and serenity which seemed to indicate that the pure spirit had anticipated the joys of heaven ere it quitted the mortal frame. To tell you what your Maidie said of you would fill volumes; for you was the constant theme

Marjorie's Self-Revelation

of her discourse, the subject of her thoughts, and ruler of her actions. The last time she mentioned you was a few hours before all sense save that of suffering was suspended, when she said to Dr. Johnstone, 'If you will let me out at the New Year, I will be quite contented.' I asked her what made her so anxious to get out then. 'I want to purchase a New Year's gift for Isa Keith with the sixpence you gave me for being patient in the measles; and I would like to choose it myself.' I do not remember her speaking afterwards, except to complain of her head, till just before she expired, when she articulated, 'O mother! mother!'"

Do we make too much of this little child, who has been in her grave in Abbotshall Kirkyard these fifty and more years? We may of her cleverness,—not of her affectionateness, her nature. What a picture the *animosa infans* gives us of herself, her vivacity, her passionateness, her precocious love-making, her passion for nature, for swine, for all living things, her reading, her turn for expression, her satire, her frankness, her little sins and

rages, her great repentances! We don't wonder Walter Scott carried her off in the neuk of his plaid, and played himself with her for hours.

Twelfth Night Supper

The year before she died, when in Edinburgh, she was at a Twelfth Night Supper at Scott's in Castle Street. The company had all come,—all but Marjorie. Scott's familiars, whom we all know, were there,—all were come but Marjorie; and all were dull because Scott was dull. "Where's that bairn? what can have come over her? I'll go myself and see." And he was getting up and would have gone, when the bell rang and in came Duncan Roy and his henchman Dougal, with the sedan-chair, which was brought right into the lobby, and its top raised. And there, in its darkness and dingy old cloth, sat Maidie in white, her eyes gleaming, and Scott bending over her in ecstasy,—"hung over her enamored." "Sit ye there, my dautie, till they all see you;" and forthwith he brought them all. You can fancy the scene. And he lifted her up and marched to his seat with her on his stout shoulder, and set her down beside him; and then began the night, and such a night!

A Short Life

Those who knew Scott best said that night was never equalled; Maidie and he were the stars; and she gave them Constance's speeches and *Helvellyn*, the ballad then much in vogue, and all her *répertoire*,—Scott showing her off, and being ofttimes rebuked by her for his intentional blunders.

We are indebted for the following—and our readers will be not unwilling to share our obligations—to her sister:

"Her birth was 15th January, 1803; her death, 19th December, 1811. I take this from her Bibles.[1] I believe she was a child of robust health, of much vigor of body, and beautifully formed arms, and until her last illness, never was an hour in bed She was niece to Mrs. Keith, residing in No. 1 North Charlotte Street, who was *not* Mrs. Murray Keith, although very intimately acquainted with that old lady. My aunt was a daughter of Mr. James Rae, surgeon, and married the younger son of old Keith of Ravelstone. Corstorphine Hill belonged to my aunt's

[1] "Her Bible is before me; *a pair*, as then called; the faded marks are just as she placed them. There is one at David's lament over Jonathan."

husband; and his eldest son, Sir Alexander Keith, succeeded his uncle to both Ravelstone and Dunnottar. The Keiths were not connected by relationship with the Howisons of Braehead; but my grandfather and grandmother (who was), a daughter of Cant of Thurston and Giles-Grange, were on the most intimate footing with *our* Mrs. Keith's grandfather and grandmother; and so it has been for three generations, and the friendship consummated by my cousin William Keith marrying Isabella Craufurd.

The Keiths and Sir Walter

"As to my aunt and Scott, they were on a very intimate footing. He asked my aunt to be godmother to his eldest daughter, Sophia Charlotte. I had a copy of Miss Edgeworth's *Rosamond*, and *Harry and Lucy*, for long which was 'a gift to Marjorie from Walter Scott,' probably the first edition of that attractive series, for it wanted *Frank* which is always now published as part of the series, under the title of *Early Lessons*. I regret to say these little volumes have disappeared."

"Sir Walter was no relation of Marjorie's, but of the Keiths, through the Swintons; and, like Marjorie, he stayed much at Ravelstone

in his early days, with his grand-aunt Mrs. Keith; and it was while seeing him there as a boy, that another aunt of mine composed, when he was about fourteen, the lines prognosticating his future fame that Lockhart ascribes in his Life to Mrs. Cockburn, authoress of *The Flowers of the Forest:*

'Go on, dear youth, the glorious path pursue
Which bounteous Nature kindly smooths for you;
Go bid the seeds her hands have sown arise,
By timely culture, to their native skies;
Go, and employ the poet's heavenly art,
Not merely to delight, but mend the heart.'

Mrs. Keir was my aunt's name, another of Dr. Rae's daughters." We cannot better end than in words from this same pen: "I have to ask you to forgive my anxiety in gathering up the fragments of Marjorie's last days, but I have an almost sacred feeling to all that pertains to her. You are quite correct in stating that measles were the cause of her death. My mother was struck by the patient quietness manifested by Marjorie during this illness, unlike her ardent, impulsive nature; but love and poetic feeling were unquenched. When Dr. Johnstone rewarded her submissiveness with a sixpence, the request speedily

A Happy Evening

followed that she might get out ere New Year's day came. When asked why she was so desirous of getting out, she immediately rejoined: 'O, I am so anxious to buy something with my sixpence for my dear Isa Keith.' Again, when lying very still, her mother asked her if there was any thing she wished: 'O yes! if you would just leave the room door open a wee bit, and play The Land o' the Leal, and I will lie and *think*, and enjoy myself' (this is just as stated to me by her mother and mine). Well, the happy day came, alike to parents and child, when Marjorie was allowed to come forth from the nursery to the parlor. It was Sabbath evening, and after tea. My father, who idolised this child, and never afterwards in my hearing mentioned her name, took her in his arms; and while walking her up and down the room, she said: 'Father, I will repeat something to you; what would you like?' He said, 'Just choose yourself, Maidie.' She hesitated for a moment between the paraphrase, 'Few are thy days, and full of woe,' and the lines of Burns already quoted, but decided on the latter, a remarkable choice for a child. The repeating these

Last Poem

lines seemed to stir up the depths of feeling in her soul. She asked to be allowed to write a poem; there was a doubt whether it would be right to allow her, in case of hurting her eyes. She pleaded earnestly, 'Just this once'; the point was yielded, her slate was given her, and with great rapidity she wrote an address of fourteen lines, 'To her loved cousin on the author's recovery,' her last work on earth:

'Oh! Isa, pain did visit me,
I was at the last extremity;
How often did I think of you,
I wished your graceful form to view,
To clasp you in my weak embrace,
Indeed I thought I'd run my race:
Good care, I'm sure, was of me taken,
But still indeed I was much shaken,
At last I daily strength did gain,
And oh! at last, away went pain:
At length the doctor thought I might
Stay in the parlor all the night;
I now continue so to do,
Farewell to Nancy and to you.'

She went to bed apparently well, awoke in the middle of the night with the old cry of woe to a mother's heart, 'My head, my head!' Three days of the dire malady, 'water in the head,' followed, and the end came."

"Soft, silken primrose, fading timelessly."

The passing of Marjorie

It is needless, it is impossible, to add anything to this: the fervour, the sweetness, the flush of poetic ecstasy, the lovely and glowing eye, the perfect nature of that bright and warm intelligence, that darling child. Lady Nairne's words, and the old tune, stealing up from the depths of the human heart, deep calling unto deep, gentle and strong like the waves of the great sea hushing themselves to sleep in the dark; the words of Burns touching the kindred chord; her last numbers, "wildly sweet," traced with thin and eager fingers, already touched by the last enemy and friend,—*moriens canit*,—and that love which is so soon to be her everlasting light, is her song's burden to the end.

"She set as sets the morning star, which goes
Not down behind the darkened west, nor hides
Obscured among the tempests of the sky,
But melts away into the light of heaven."

HW 26GM Q